

Consumer Reports

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Fountain

Pens

Ball Point

Pens

Postwar

Jazz and

Cameras

Records

Ratings

Classical

Elec-
tric
Shavers

Tooth
Pastes
Powders

CONSUMER REPORTS

Volume 11, No. 11

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November, 1944

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CONSUMERS UNION is a non-profit organization chartered under the Membership Corporation Laws of New York state. Ratings of products represent the best judgment of staff technicians or of consultants in university government or private laboratories. Samples for test are in practically all cases bought on the open market by CU's shopkeepers. Ratings are based on laboratory tests, carefully controlled use tests, the opinion of qualified authorities and the experience of a large number of persons, or on a combination of these factors. Even with rigid use tests, interpretation of findings is a matter on which expert opinions often differ. It is Consumers Union's policy that opinions underlying data in evaluations shall be as free from bias as it is possible to make them.

Profits for All

There was a theory, in the good old days, that under our system of free enterprise, sound businessness, whether through superior skill or of the owners and managers or not, plain luck, would flourish and bring wealth to the owners. This theory, however, was not as simple as it seemed. It was expected, and was, that the competition, by bringing larger profits to some, and only losses to others, would bring this competition to its knees. This supposed—and to the extent that there was free competition the consumer did benefit.

For a long time, time before World War II, wars were being carried on in the business community to stifle competition, and while these wars might be said to be the hazard of a free market in themselves, they were never reluctant to destroy the profits of competitors and drive them out of business. In other words, our present-day economy was not built on the rule that profits must be maintained in every case who chose to enter any particular business.

The first indication of change, however, when, to safeguard the war effort and to protect consumers, Congress set up a price control agency. Then, during record-breaking profits for business as a whole and for the various industries, a great hue and cry was raised that OPA was out to destroy industry, to take individual businessmen's money.

Two new profit principles came to govern business. The first was that while shortages and price control continued, any industry was entitled to as big profits as it could get out of government and consumers by using friends within the government, a union, by proper public connections, based on tales of hardship, and, when necessary, by evasive action against the government and the people.

The second was that if any small segment of an industry was not making adequate profits, the entire industry

was entitled to a price rise. It was the successful operation of these principles (from industry's point of view) and not the end of shortages, that brought large price boosts from OPA and finally doomed the price agency and price control.

The influence of real estate and housing interests on the application of these same principles to rents now threatens the weakening and final destruction of rent control years before the supply of homes even approaches a balance with demand.

One is asked by the real estate people to believe that there has been no increase in rents, as there has been in practically everything else. Actually, the general reduction in services, particularly recreation and repairs, is, from the landlord's point of view, exactly equivalent to a substantial rent increase. And rare are the landlords who have not profited from reduction of vacancies, and from the elimination of concessions and commissions to real estate agents. Furthermore hundreds of thousands of rent increases have been granted by OPA.

All of this shows up in the profit figures. As OPA survey in 26 cities showed rent increasing income for apartment houses up 24.9% in 1943 as compared with 1939, and for small structures, the increase was 43.5%. Furthermore, present regulations do permit rent increases where hardship can be shown, and such increases are being granted at the rate of about 20,000 a month.

Unless one believes that it is "unfair" to require landlords suffering genuine hardship to apply individually for rent increases, or that it is "unfair" for landlords to be barred from making all the profits they could by "haggling" individually with their tenants in the present housing market, then he should oppose any slackening of present rent controls. There's need for "fairness"—to millions of consumers.

EDITOR: Arthur Noller

EDITOR: Madeline Ross

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SOME POSTWAR CAMERAS

An analysis of several available types and ratings of 13 brands—with some precautions for the buyer.

The expected postwar avalanche of cameras has thus far been only a trickle. But in the trickle there have been cameras of many kinds and at a wide range of prices. Nothing has yet appeared on the American market, however, to take the place which, before the war, was occupied by the *Leica*, the *Contax*, the *Rolleiflex*, and other outstanding examples of foreign camera- and lens-makers' skills.

If your interest in photography goes no further than the taking of family snapshots or making a picture record of the annual vacation trip, there are a number of inexpensive cameras on the market which are as good as their prewar counterparts, and which will perform well and reliably for you. These range from the tiny *Baby Brownie Special* box camera, a fine buy at \$1.85 to the *Kodak Vigilant Six-20* folding camera at \$22.30, a simple, convenient and well-made camera with a good lens and adequate shutter.

For those who take their photography more seriously, a number of cameras are available, ranging in price from about \$60 to \$250, some



The BROWNIE REFLEX, synchro model (\$7.80). Accessory attachments for synchronized flash are simple to attach and use.

of them good and some very bad. Many of these cameras have excellent features, but almost without exception, they show faults of design or workmanship which detract from their value and, in some cases, make them valueless. The \$241 *Kodak Medalist* which CU is testing, for example, (detailed rating of this camera will appear in a later issue of the *Reports*), was shipped out of the factory with the range finder not synchronized with the lens, so that pictures taken with it at full lens opening were out of focus. A *Clarus* camera and one of two *Perflex* cameras now being tested were found to be completely useless because the film simply could not be wound.

The best of the twin-lens reflex cameras so far tested—the *Ciroflex*—despite its general excellence is so difficult to load that some buyers may decide it can't be done and give up in despair.

A camera of some interest to photographers who take a great many pictures is the *Mercury II*. It takes 65 single-frame 35 millimeter (mm.) pictures on a standard roll, instead of the usual 36 exposures with the double-frame 35 mm. cameras. However, rolls about half the standard length are available, and those who load their own film into cartridges can use shorter lengths of film for fewer exposures. Satisfactory enlargements of moderate size can be made from the *Mercury* negatives. It is a well-constructed camera with rotary focal-plane shutter and speeds ranging from a twentieth to a

thousandth of a second. There is no range finder, but because the very short focal length of the lens (35 mm.) gives relatively great depth of focus, a high degree of accuracy in focusing is not needed except for very close work with the lens wide open.

Another unique camera is the *Kodak Bantam* which is small enough to be carried around in pocket or handbag. It is well-designed, simple to use, and takes eight 1-1/8 x 1-9/16 inch pictures (a trifle larger than with double-frame 35 mm. cameras) on special *Bantam* roll film.

Many of the new cameras have provision for use of automatic flash, and some are available with inexpensive flash attachments. Outstanding among the cheap and simple cameras is the *Synchro Model Brownie Reflex* which sells for \$7.80 with flash attachment available for \$3.85. This is an excellent camera for the occasional snapshot or for children old enough to take pictures. It has a fixed focus lens, with a minimum of adjustments, and with a large, brilliant finder. The flash is simply attached and easily used. The *Brownie Reflex* has the disadvantage of small



The CIROFLEX MODEL B (\$73.06), an outstanding buy in the present camera market; an excellent camera except for difficult loading and unloading.



The ARGOFLEX (\$69.65 with case) takes good pictures, but it's not as good a buy as the CIROFLEX.



The ARGUS C3 (\$70.33 including flash attachment and case) can take good pictures, though it lacks the automatic features of other cameras.



The KODAK VIGILANT SIX-20 (\$22.30) is an excellent buy for almost any amateur who wants a good, inexpensive camera.



The KODAK BANTAM (\$34.40) takes 8 pictures on special Bantam film, but enlargement is necessary (as with 35 mm. film).

picture size (1-5/8 x 1-5/8 inches). Of necessity this camera, like the various box and other cheap cameras, has an uncorrected lens which cannot be expected to give very good definition. But if the photographer is not too critical, and is satisfied with contact prints or with relatively small enlargements, the pictures are quite acceptable. As a matter of fact, the occasional and casual picture taker is likely to get better pictures with such a camera than with a fine camera requiring a great many adjustments which are easily forgotten. CU is testing *Anso* and other cheap cameras, but the various *Brownies* appear to be generally superior.

One brand-new postwar feature found in many of the more expensive

cameras is the coated lens. Lens coating does improve lens quality, and doubtless it will appear on more and more of the better cameras as time passes. The *Ciroflex*, the *Argoflex* and the *Mercury* were among the cameras tested which had coated lenses. The purpose of the coating is to reduce reflections from lens surfaces and hence to improve light transmission and contrast, and reduce ghost images and flare.

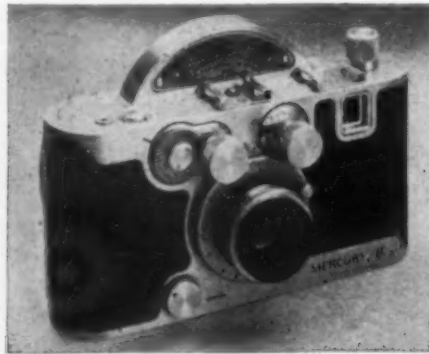
Tests of the shutter speeds of the cameras showed most of them to be reasonably accurate. The actual speeds were found to be closest to the marked speeds in the *Mercury*, which has a unique rotating focal-plane shutter. The shutters on all three *Argus* cameras tested were at

the bottom of the list in accuracy. One *Argus* shutter gave exposures 150% longer than marked at the 1/100th second setting.

Because of faults in workmanship and careless inspection in the factories, the buyer—especially of an expensive camera—should check the camera to whatever extent is possible in the store before taking it out, and he should try to get a ten-day return or exchange privilege. Many reputable photographic dealers sell cameras on this basis. No matter how good one sample of a camera is, another sample of the same brand may be inoperable. Load a roll of film in the camera you want to buy and go through all the motions of taking pictures, winding the film



The KODAK 35 WITHOUT RANGE FINDER (\$35), is a good buy for those who do not want to pay the price of a good 35 mm. range-finder camera.



The MERCURY II, MODEL CX (\$82.90), has a rotary focal plane shutter with eight speeds (1/20th to 1/1000th of a second) and takes 65 pictures on a standard 35 mm. roll.



The KODAK 35 WITH RANGE FINDER (\$77.15), is an excellent 35 mm. camera for the price. The special flash attachment costs \$7.55 extra.



The **BROWNIE TARGET SIX-20** (\$3.60) is a sturdy, dependable camera for those who take occasional snapshots in good light.

through to the end of the roll and unloading it. If you can, actually take a number of exposures and have the film processed as a check, mainly on accuracy of focusing. If the camera has a range finder, try it at different distances to see whether the two images come together as they should. On some range-finder cameras, the two images do not meet perfectly when focused upon an object at any distance. On some cameras the adjustments are so stiff that a good deal of finger strength is required for making them. Sometimes, the adjustments just don't work. Put every adjustment on the camera through its paces to make sure.

Whether one should buy a 35 mm. camera or a larger camera is an old problem to which there is no more definite answer now than there was when the problem first arose with the introduction of 35 mm. cameras some years ago. For most amateur photographers who want to take lots of color pictures economically, the 35 mm. size is a clear choice. The 35 mm. color film is relatively inexpensive, and the processor sends back mounted color transparencies which can be viewed with a hand or table viewer or projected on a screen. The 35 mm. camera is also advantageous for those who want to be able to take a great many pictures without reloading or to take a series of pictures in rapid succession. The usual 35 mm. roll gives 36 exposures, as compared with eight or 12 for other roll film cameras. The very short focal length lenses on the 35 mm. cameras give great depth of field as compared with the longer focal length lenses on the larger

cameras. This depth of field makes it possible to have both near and distant objects in reasonably good focus at the same time.

The chief disadvantage of the 35 mm. camera is that the negatives must be enlarged to give satisfactory prints; and the lens must give good enough definition to permit enlargement without excessive loss of detail, and the film must be processed with special care to avoid graininess. Another disadvantage for those who don't take many pictures is that the roll is likely to be left in the camera unfinished for months on end, until the pictures have lost a good deal of their interest. Still another disadvantage for the more serious amateur is that he may find it difficult to study and compose a picture through the tiny viewer of a 35 mm. camera.

One of the most popular types of cameras among photographers is the twin-lens reflex, which gives twelve $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inch negatives on a roll. With such a camera, the view is photographed as seen in full negative size on a ground glass and, except for color, roughly as it will appear in the picture. The *Rolleiflex*, prototype of twin-lens reflex cameras, has been popular with many professionals as well as amateurs, and many a photographer is waiting for more *Rolleiflexes* to come into this country or for an American manufacturer to produce something as good. CU has not yet been able to purchase the new Kodak twin-lens reflex. Of the two cameras of this type purchased, the *Ciroflex* and the *Argoflex*, the *Ciroflex* rates well above the *Argoflex* because its larger viewing lens gives a much brighter and clearer image on the ground glass, and also because of the greater maximum aperture of f:3.5 as compared with f:4.5 in the *Argoflex*.

The ratings which follow are based on use tests of the cameras, careful examination by a consultant, and laboratory tests of lenses and shutters. The shutter tests were limited, however, to determination of the initial accuracy of shutter markings. Only one or two samples of each camera were purchased for the tests, but in most cases the results of tests and examinations of these cameras were supplemented by surveys of use experience. All prices include Federal tax.

ACCEPTABLE

Box Type

Baby Brownie Special (Eastman Kodak



The **BABY BROWNIE SPECIAL** (\$1.85) is suitable only for use in bright daylight, or with photo floods when used with Super XX film.

Co., Rochester, N. Y.). \$1.85. Takes 8 pictures, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ inches on #127 roll. Uncorrected fixed-focus lens. Only one shutter speed (about 1/25th second). No time or bulb setting, and only one fixed aperture. Eye-level optical finder. Plastic body. Hand strap. Suitable only for use in daylight, or with photo floods (with Super XX film).

Brownie Reflex, Synchro Model (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$7.80. Takes twelve pictures, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ inches on #127 roll. Uncorrected, fixed-focus lens. Instantaneous and bulb shutter settings. One fixed aperture. Large, reflecting, optical finder, approximately the size of negative. Takes Kodak lens attachment for close-up pictures. Accessory attachment for synchronized flash costs \$3.85, and is simple to attach and to use. Neck strap. Plastic body with metal trim. This camera has the disadvantage of small picture size.

Brownie Target Six-20 (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$3.60. A conventional box camera taking eight pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ inches on #620 film. Uncorrected fixed-focus lens. Two aperture settings for different light conditions. Instantaneous and bulb shutter settings. Two waist-level brilliant finders. Reinforced cardboard body covered with imitation leather. Many will prefer this camera to the Baby Brownie Special or the Brownie Reflex because of its larger picture. It is a sturdy, dependable camera for those who take occasional snapshots in good light. Kodak portrait attachment can be used for close-ups.

Brownie Target Six-16. (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$4. A larger edition of the Brownie Target Six-20, taking eight pictures, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches on #616 film.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Folding Cameras

Kodak Vigilant Six-20 (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$22.30; case \$6. Takes eight pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches on #620 film. **Kodak Anastigmat** 105 mm. f:6.3 lens. Three shutter speeds (1/25th, 1/50th, 1/100th) plus T and B. Shutter release on body of camera. Provision for cable release. Focuses from $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet to infinity. Optical eye-level finder and waist-level brilliant finder. Opens or folds with two motions. Hand strap. Metal body. Two tripod sockets. This is an excellent camera, and can be recommended for almost any amateur, who wants a good inexpensive camera.

Kodak Vigilant Six-16 (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$25.70; case \$7. Practically the same as the **Vigilant Six-20** above except that it takes eight pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches on #616 film, has a 130 millimeter focal length lens, and can be focused from 4 ft. to infinity.

Twin Lens Reflex Cameras

Ciroflex Model B (Ciro, Inc., Detroit). \$73.06 with **Alphax** shutter; \$92.71 with **Rapax** shutter. Case \$7.70 extra. Takes 12 pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inches on #120 film. **Wollensak Velostigmat** 85 mm. f:3.5 coated taking lens; f:3.2 **Wollensak Anastigmat** viewing lens. **Alphax** shutter has five speeds (1/10th to 1/200th second) plus T and B. **Rapax** shutter has nine speeds (1 second to 1/400th second) plus T and B. Focuses from three feet to infinity with convenient focusing knob at side of camera. Single-motion collapsible hood. Large focusing magnifier. Hood can be adjusted for direct eye-level viewing. Two tripod sockets. All metal body. This is generally an excellent camera, with only one serious flaw: loading and unloading of film is difficult. If you can manage the loading and unloading without too much difficulty, the **Ciroflex** is an outstanding buy in the present camera market.

Argoflex (Argus, Inc., Ann Arbor, Mich.) \$69.65 including case. (Not sold without case.) Takes 12 pictures, $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inches on #620 film. **Varex Anastigmat** 75 mm. f:4.5 coated taking lens; f:4.5 **anastigmat** viewing lens. Five shutter speeds (1/10th second to 1/200th second) plus T and B. Shutter speeds on sample tested inaccurate. Shutter speed and aperture markings rather difficult to read. Focuses from $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet to infinity by means of milled rings on taking and viewing lens mounts. Hood opens with one motion, but requires four motions to close. Focusing magnifier. Hood can be adjusted for direct eye-level viewing. One tripod socket. Plastic and metal body. F:4.5 viewing lens gives image considerably dimmer than that of **Ciroflex**. Can take good pictures, but

except for loading is generally inferior to **Ciroflex**.

35 Millimeter and Bantam

Kodak 35 with Range Finder and Flash Kodamatic Shutter (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$77.15; case \$8. Takes 36 pictures, 26×34 mm. on standard 35 mm. roll. **Kodak Anastigmat Special** f:3.5 coated 50 mm. lens. Five shutter speeds (1/10th to 1/200th second) plus T and B. Focusing by milled disc at side of lens. Focuses from 4 feet to infinity. Coupled split-field range finder; separate optical view finder. Plastic and metal body. Automatic shutter-setting device activated by film transport. Indicator shows whether shutter is cocked. Automatic exposure counter. Accidental double exposures impossible. Neck strap attached to camera. Built-in shielding of lens eliminates need for separate shade. Flash attachment \$7.55 extra, uses only small flash bulbs. This is an excellent camera for the price.

Argus C3 (Argus, Inc.) \$70.33 including flash attachment and case. (Not sold without flash and case.) Takes 36

pictures, 26×34 mm. on standard 35 mm. roll. **Cintar** f:3.5 coated 50 mm. lens. Seven shutter speeds (1/10th to 1/300th second) plus B. Shutter speeds on sample tested inaccurate. Separate shutter cocking lever. Plastic shutter blades must not be exposed to excessive heat. Coupled split-field range finder; separate optical view finder. Focusing by means of milled ring. Automatic exposure counter. Film speed indicator. Heavy plastic and metal body. This camera lacks automatic features and refinements of other cameras but can take good pictures. The **Argus C2** is the same as the **Argus C3** except that it has no flash synchronization.

Mercury II, Model CX (Universal Camera Corp., NYC). \$82.90; case \$7.25. Takes 65 pictures, 19×24 mm. on standard 35 mm. roll. **Universal** f:2.7 **Tricolor** coated 35 mm. lens. Rotary focal plane shutter with eight speeds (1/20th to 1/1000th second) plus T and B. Film winding automatically sets shutter, making double exposure impossible. Automatic exposure counter. Optical eye-level view finder. No range finder, but great depth of focus resulting from use of very short focus lens makes range finder relatively unnecessary. Exposure computer and film speed indicator on back of camera. Focusing from 18 inches to infinity by means of milled knob on lens mount. Provision for synchronized flash. Takes interchangeable lenses. Sturdy metal body. (Flash attachment \$7.30) Lens in sample tested of fair quality, giving pictures capable of moderate enlargement.

Kodak 35 with Flash Diomatic Shutter, without range finder (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$35; case \$5. Operation essentially the same as other Kodak 35 above, except that it has no coupled range finder, has an f:4.5 **Kodak Anastigmat** 51 mm. lens and shutter speeds from 1/25th to 1/150th second plus T and B. The eye level optical finder has a hand set parallax adjustment. This is an excellent 35 mm. camera, price considered, and is a good buy for those who do not want to pay the price of a good range finder camera.

Kodak Bantam (Eastman Kodak Co.). \$34.40; case \$5. Takes eight pictures, $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{9}{16}$ inches on #828 **Bantam** film made only by Eastman. **Kodak Anastigmat Special** f:4.5, 47 mm. lens. Four shutter speeds (1/25th to 1/200th second) plus T and B. Focuses from $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet to infinity. Optical eye-level finder. Pressing button snaps camera open. Shutter release on body of camera. Automatic stop positions film without need for watching film numbers in window. Small and compact metal and plastic body. Can take good pictures but enlargement is necessary as with 35 mm. film.

Progress Report

Work on the following reports, among others, is either now under way or scheduled to begin soon:

Washing Machines

Electric Refrigerators

Electric Toasters

Pressure Cookers

Projectors for Color Film

Photoelectric Exposure Meters

Women's Slips

Orange Juicers

Auto Jacks

Soap Substitutes

Spot Removers

Bath Preparations

Mechanical Pencils

Carbon Paper



The ball-point pens (from left to right): SHEAFFER STRATOWRITER, EBERHARD FABER, EVERSHARP CA, FIELDSTON RE-TRACT-O, EAGLE ORBIC, BLYTHE, JET FLOW, BEDELL, KIMBERLY CALIFORNIAN, REYNOLDS ROCKETTE, VAN CLEEVE, PACKET, ROLBALL, BALL-O-MATIC, BIROME, BLYTHE, MEMOMARX, ARKON, REYNOLDS, REYNOLDS 400, REYNOLDS ROCKET, and STYLE KING MAGIC FLOW.

BALL-POINT PENS

The bright novelty of ball-point pens is beginning to show signs of tarnish, as cut prices and price competition replace the mad rush of high-priced, low-quality merchandise offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. For example, the *Van Cleeve* which, according to the ads, "was a bargain at \$5" is now available as the "lowest priced ball-point pen on earth," for \$2.69. A "famous make" ball-point pen—actually the old *Blythe*—of which "countless thousands have been sold at \$9.95 each" can now be bought at the "record new low price" of \$3.75.

The Reynolds Pen Co. which made net sales of almost eleven million dollars, and profits after taxes of two and two-thirds million dollars during its first year in business, presumably from its first models retailing at \$12.50, has swung over to production of the \$5.85 *Packet*, the \$3.85 *Rocket* ("the longest pen you've ever seen") and the \$5.99 *Rockette* ("lowest price on earth for a gold-plated ball-point pen").

The \$5.98 *Fieldston Re-Tract-O* has displaced the \$19.98 *Birome* from the shelves of Macy's Department Store, which formerly handled the

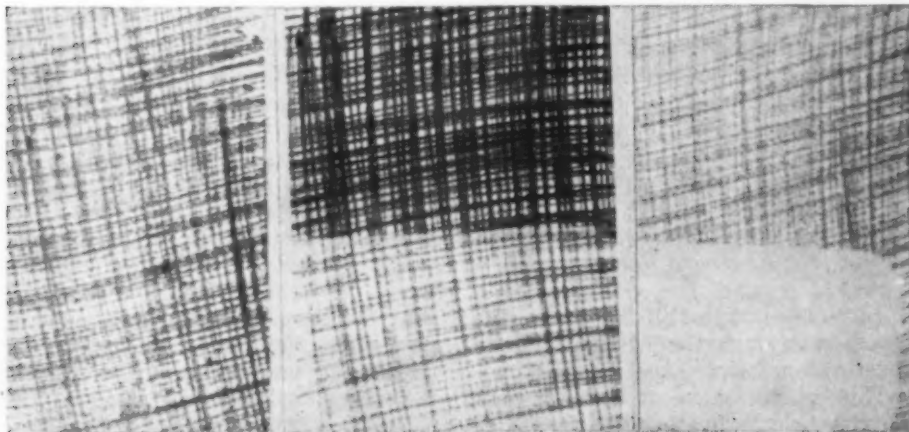
good-looking but bad-acting Argentine number. *Blythe*, the first ball-point pen to appear at the under-\$12.50 level has been revamped into a much better retractable point pen at \$2.98, thus scotching *Re-Tract-O's* claim that "there is no lower price anywhere for a retractable ball-point pen."

Despite all this hubbub, ball-point pen supplies are large enough to meet demand, and shoppers report that the lines of dissatisfied buyers waiting to get refunds on their pens at some department stores are longer than lines of people waiting to buy. It has been reported that over 100,000 of the pioneer *Reynolds* pens were returned as unsatisfactory in seven months.

The old-line fountain pen firms are, so far, keeping strictly out of the noisy price competition. *Eversharp* and *Eberhard Faber* ball pens remain at their \$15 price level; *Sheaffer*, a newer entry in the ball-point race, is producing a \$12.50 item. *Waterman's* and *Parker*, the other two big names in fountain pens, have left the ball-point field alone to date.

Just what can these new entrants into the writing field offer?

At best, they'll write easily but without much character (no shading, such as results from the flexibility of an ordinary pen) on prac-



All of the above writing samples were exposed in a Fadeometer for the same length of time. The results ranged from no fading (*VAN CLEEVE*), moderate fading (*JET FLOW*) to almost complete fading (*MEMOMARX*).

tically any surface. They can be used to make carbon copies, the number depending on how much pressure is used. They'll write for a long time without refilling, the length of time depending on the ink supply and the fluidity of the ink. They write practically dry, so that no blotting is necessary. They can be used under a wide variety of unlikely circumstances: under water, upside down, and at any altitude.

That's when they're at their best.

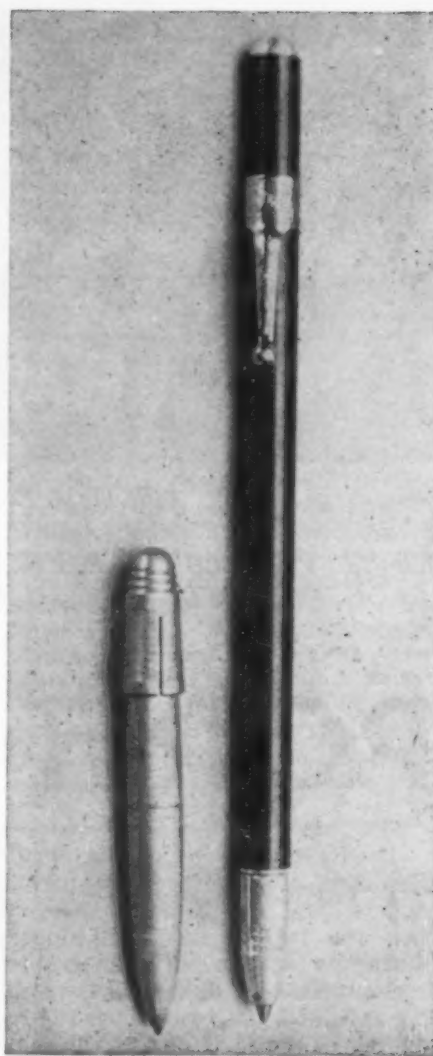
At worst—and most of the pens tested embody one or more of the characteristics that show how bad they can be—they balk and refuse to write at all. Or they'll write only with so much effort that the whole thing seems hardly worth the trouble. Or they'll write unevenly, with a sort of dotted line effect, sometimes depositing large gobs of ink where they're not supposed to.

Some of them write like a dream, but leak at the joints, so that the user's fingers become messed up with hard-to-remove ink. Or the writing looks fine when it is produced, but fades to nothing if it is exposed to sunlight for a period. Or their ink supply, though many times larger than that of an ordinary fountain pen, requires replenishing every few months, so that a year's ink bills may run high.

Be that as it may, there can be no question regarding the improvements which have been made since the ball-point pens were first introduced. The first *Reynolds* and *Birome* pens were little more than expensive novelties—crude instruments which would write after a fashion if you used enough effort. But unless you were unusually persistent, you would get out your trusty old fountain pen when you had real writing to do.

A number of the pens being produced now are truly functioning instruments. They can be used and are being used to fill a real need. But for many, perhaps most, users they supplement, but do not replace, the conventional fountain pen, since handwriting produced with even the best ball-point has a somewhat mechanical appearance. As one bank teller commented when cashing a check signed with a ball-point, "It looks as though it had been put on with a multigraph."

Nor are all the ball-point pens now being produced of high—or even mediocre—quality. Even now, more than a year after their introduction in this country, CU's examinations showed a high percentage of sam-



The MEMOMARX (left) and the REYNOLDS ROCKET (right), were the shortest and longest of the pens tested. Poor writing quality placed both on the "Not Acceptable" list.

ples which would either not write at all, or wrote so erratically that they could not be considered "Acceptable" for even occasional use. Many others were in a twilight zone of usefulness—they were usable, but the extra effort they required and their uneven performance would probably cause them to be out of use most of the time. A few—the *Sheaffer Strato-writer*, the *Eberhard Faber*, the *Ever-sharp CA* and the *Fieldston Re-Tract-O*—though still far from perfect, gave rather consistently good performance over a period of time.

The performance of the best pens in the field indicates that the three chief difficulties facing ball-point pen producers can be overcome. The first is the production of a suitable ink: one thick enough to feed slowly

to the point without leaking out, but at the same time thin enough to give a smooth, even, continuous line. Furthermore, the ink must be reasonably resistant to fading from light and age; it must be non-corrosive to the portions of the mechanism with which it is in contact; it must dry without smearing almost as soon as it touches the paper, but it must not dry out on the point of the pen, causing it to clog or to start with difficulty.

Problem two has been the production of a suitable tip assembly. This has been easy enough on the drawing board, but the use of a ball point 1 millimeter (about 1/25 inch) in diameter in a housing which allows free rotation and free—but not too free—flow of ink, involves some very fine mechanical tolerances, not usually encountered in mass production. Many of the failures in individual specimens of ball-point pens are the result of inadequate observance of these tolerances. An important corollary of this fact is that pens of all brands vary, more or less, from sample to sample. Buyers are advised to try several at the time of purchase, and to select the one which gives smoothest performance.

A third, though somewhat less complicated difficulty has been in the selection of a satisfactory feed mechanism. The various manufacturers have solved this in a variety of ways, more or less adequately. *Reynolds* pens have the maximum possible ink supply, with the entire barrel of the pen holding ink. The great trouble with this is that the pens must be sent back to the factory for refilling, and the pen owner is left without a writing instrument during the filling process. Furthermore, this design requires a rather stiff ink, so that considerable effort is needed for writing. Most other manufacturers utilize a refill cartridge. In many pens, including the *Eversharp CA* and the *Eberhard Faber*, the refill is easily inserted quite independently of the point. The disadvantage, particularly apparent in these two brands, is that the ink can and sometimes does leak out at the place where the tip assembly is screwed into the barrel—just where the fingers hold the pen. The refill cartridges on some other pens, including the *Sheaffer*, and the *Fieldston Re-Tract-O* are joined to the points, so that no ink can leak at the juncture. Any ink which leaks at the point itself, though it must be wiped off occasionally, is likely to be less messy

during writing than leakage further up the pen.

Ink replacements for the various pens tested cost 35¢ to \$1, with some of them requiring the whole pen to be sent back to the factory, others being sold for replacement by the user. While replacement of the ink unit is simple enough on most pens, CU cannot recommend that you do the job in your best white gloves, as suggested by the *Eversharp* ads.

Guarantees on the pens vary considerably, and some of them involve a good deal of hedging. Thus, while the *Reynolds Rocket* "Writes and writes and writes for 15 years without refilling," the manufacturers will guarantee to keep it supplied with ink without additional charge for only six years. The *Eversharp*, despite boasts about its ability to write 74,802 words without refilling, actually has no guarantee on the amount of writing it will do, and its "guaranteed forever" turns out to cost you 35¢ every time your pen needs fixing. Some pens are handed to the consumer on a strictly "take-it-or-leave-it" basis, with no guarantee or indication of service charge. It has been CU's experience, however, that even these can be returned to reputable stores for exchange or refund, if they turn out to be defective.

CU'S TESTS

The ratings cover all ball-point pens CU shoppers found in the stores. Three or more samples of each brand were tested. Factors considered included expert evaluation of construction, design and workmanship, quality of the parts and ink capacity. Inks were exposed to the strong carbon arc illumination of a fadeometer to determine likelihood of fading in sunlight. In addition, two samples of each pen were given use tests.

The pens are rated below in order of over-all quality, best first. Only those high on the "Acceptable" list are judged suitable for steady use.

ACCEPTABLE

(In estimated order of quality)

Sheaffer Stratowriter (Sheaffer Pen Co., Fort Madison, Iowa). \$12.50 plus 20% Federal tax. Wrote very smoothly and evenly with minimum effort. Blue ink which faded very slightly after exposure in Fadeometer. Similar to a mechanical pencil in appearance; well-designed and constructed; gold-plate finish. Point retracted by means of spring mechanism at top of pencil.

Some leakage at tip, which must be wiped off occasionally to keep from getting fingers messy. Refills available in exchange for old unit plus \$1; price of spare refill unit without trade-in, \$3.50. Refill unit includes point. Free service guaranteed indefinitely if pen is defective; service given if pen is damaged for cost of new parts plus service charge.

Eberhard Faber (Eberhard Faber Corp., NYC.). \$15 plus 20% Federal tax. Wrote very smoothly and evenly with minimum effort, but some samples showed tendency to skip after a few months' use. Blue ink which faded very slightly after exposure in Fadeometer. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction, with plastic barrel and gold-filled cap. Tendency to leak at junction of tip and barrel required frequent wiping to keep from getting fingers messy. Refill cartridges available for 50¢; easily inserted. Service charge of 35¢ plus cost of replacement parts.

Eversharp CA (Eversharp Inc., NYC.). \$15 plus 20% Federal tax. Wrote very smoothly and evenly with minimum effort when new, but showed tendency to skip after a few months' use. Blue ink which faded considerably after exposure in Fadeometer. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction, with plastic barrel and gold-filled cap. Some samples showed tendency to leak at junction of tip and barrel, requiring frequent wiping to keep from getting fingers messy. Refill cartridges available for 50¢ easily inserted. Four refill colors advertised, but only blue available at time of test. Service charge of 35¢ plus cost of replacement parts.

Fieldston Re-Tract-O (Fieldston Ball Pen Co., Bronx, N. Y.). \$5.98. Wrote very smoothly and evenly with very little effort. Blue ink which faded appreciably after exposure in Fadeometer. One sample showed tendency to skip and write too lightly. Similar to mechanical pencil in appearance; aluminum with brass clip. Point retracted by turning upper half of barrel. Refills available for 95¢. Refill unit includes new point. Guaranteed against defects; damage repaired for 35¢ plus old parts. A "Best Buy" provided you are careful to select an individual sample which writes smoothly and darkly enough.

Eagle Orbic (Eagle Pencil Co., NYC). \$10. Wrote smoothly and evenly. Blue ink which faded appreciably after exposure in Fadeometer. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction, with plastic barrel and aluminum cap. Refills available for \$1. **Renew-All** refill unit includes new point. Service charge of 35¢ for repairs.

Jet Flow (Hamilton Ross Corp., Minneapolis). \$10. Some samples showed tendency to skip. Bright blue ink which faded appreciably after ex-

posure in Fadeometer. Similar to mechanical pencil in appearance, with enameled bottom and plated top. Point retracted by turning upper part of barrel. Pen refilled for 35¢ if sent to factory. Service charge of 35¢ for repairs.

Blythe (Ball Pen Co., Hollywood, Calif.). \$2.98. Wrote fairly smoothly, but some samples showed tendency to skip. Blue ink which faded slightly after exposure in Fadeometer. Similar to mechanical pencil in appearance, with aluminum and plastic barrel. Point retracted by means of spring and button at top of pen. Small ink capacity. Refills advertised as being available, but no price given and not found in stores at time of test. Refill unit includes point. No guarantee or service instructions supplied with pens purchased. A "Best Buy" for occasional use; not as smooth as other brands listed above, and judged not smooth enough for steady use.

Bedell (Bedell Pen Co., Stamford, Conn.). \$5.95. Wrote fairly smoothly, but somewhat unevenly. Dark blue ink which faded considerably after exposure in Fadeometer. Similar to mechanical pencil in appearance, with plastic bottom and aluminum top. Point retracted by twisting upper half of barrel. Refills available for 50¢ plus return of old unit. Refill unit includes new point. Service charge of 35¢ for repairs for two years after purchase.

Kimberly Californian (Kimberly Corp., Los Angeles). \$12.50. Wrote fairly smoothly but somewhat unevenly. Writing angle restricted by design of barrel, which covers all except tip of point. Bright blue ink which faded appreciably after exposure in Fadeometer. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction with plastic barrel and aluminum cap. Cap on one pen loosely fitted, with tendency to fall off; clip unsatisfactory. Point and ink barrel in single unit. Service free, including refill, for two years after purchase; subsequent charge for service and parts. No indication of cost of subsequent refill.

Reynolds Rockette (Reynolds Pen Co., Chicago). \$5.99 plus 20% Federal tax. Some drag in writing; some tendency to skip. Blue-violet ink. One-piece construction, somewhat similar to mechanical pencil in appearance. Point covered by pulling sleeve over it. Movable clip which scratches finish of barrel badly, and which can fall off easily. Large ink capacity, with ink supply in barrel; no cartridge. Pens serviced and repaired for 50¢ if sent to factory. Refilling free for six years, after six years, 50¢.

Van Cleeve (Clevelandt Corp., NYC). \$2.69 in aluminum; \$12.50 plus 20% Federal tax in silver; \$62.50 plus 20% Federal tax in gold. Some samples dragged in writing and tended to skip. Very dark blue ink with practically no

fading after exposure in Fadeometer. Somewhat more bulky than most mechanical pencils. Point covered by pulling down sleeve which constitutes bottom half of pen. This sleeve was very stiff, and on some samples it pulled off completely. Very poor clip. Large ink capacity, with ink supply in barrel. No indication regarding availability of refills or servicing; no guarantee supplied with pen.

Packet (Reynolds Pen Co., Chicago). \$5.85. Considerable drag in writing, with some unevenness and skipping. Blue-black ink which faded very slightly after exposure in Fadeometer. Two-piece construction, with holder for use as desk pen. Aluminum cap with colored aluminum barrel. Large ink capacity, with ink supply directly in barrel. Pens serviced and refilled for 35¢ if sent to factory.

Rolball (Rolla Ball Pen Corp., NYC). \$4.95. Some samples dragged in writing, with some unevenness. Ink color may be objectionably light; faded substantially after exposure in Fadeometer. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction, with plastic barrel and metal top and point. Refills available for \$1 plus return of old unit. Refill unit includes new point. Service charge of 35¢ for repairs.

Ball-O-Matic (Universal Pen Co., NYC). \$2.95. Some drag in writing, with some unevenness. Ink color may be objectionably light. Conventional two-piece fountain pen construction with plastic barrel and aluminum tip and cap. Free replacement of defective parts; service charge of 35¢ plus old parts for repairs on damaged pens. Very small ink tube; no indication regarding availability of refills.

NOT ACCEPTABLE

The following ball-point pens were rated down because samples tested failed to write after a relatively short period of use, or because they wrote very poorly. Order of listing is alphabetical.

Birome (Manufactured in Argentina; distributed by R. H. Macy Co., NYC). \$19.98. Failed to write after few months' use. Case badly corroded.

Blythe (Ball Pen Co., Hollywood). \$9.95. This is a two-piece aluminum and plastic pen, not to be confused with the \$2.98 Blythe listed above. Failed to write after short period of use.

Memomarx (Charmore Co., NYC). \$4.95. A novelty pen, about four inches long, intended as a memo pencil for pocket or handbag. Some samples very poor in writing ability from beginning; failed to write after short period of time.

Arkon (Arkon Pen Co., Chicago). \$6.95. Failed to write after short period of use.

Reynolds (Reynolds Pen Co.). \$12.50.

This was the first Reynolds ball point produced. It is no longer generally available at this time. It wrote poorly and failed to write after several months' use.

Reynolds 400 (Reynolds Pen Co.). \$12.50. This was the second Reynolds model produced. It has since been superseded. Writing was difficult and uneven from the start and became worse after use.

Reynolds Rocket (Reynolds Pen Co.). \$3.85. A novelty pen, about 7½ inches long, equipped with "launching plat-

form." Much to-do is made of the claim that it is "the longest pen you've ever seen," and that it "will write up to fifteen years without refilling for the average user." Its ink capacity is truly very large, but writing quality was found very poor, as was general construction and workmanship.

Style King Magic Flow (S. Buchsbaum & Co., Chicago). \$12.50. Only one of three samples satisfactory when first purchased; even this failed to write after it had been in use for a few months.

FOUNTAIN PENS

Good, inexpensive pens are scarce; but it is possible to find a good-quality gold point pen for as little as \$3.50

Bad postwar fountain pens clog and scratch, or leak and drip, just as their prewar counterparts used to do. Good postwar pens do all these unpleasant things less frequently, but still just about as often as their prewar counterparts. The battle still wages between "streamliners" and conventional styles, but something new has been added in the form of a ball-point pen (see page 287) which is offering the ordinary fountain pen a good deal of competition. Prices are rather high, though not spectacularly so and, with some diligent searching, you should be able to buy a good quality gold-point pen for as little as \$3.50.

Here are some of the things you should know about if you are in the market for a fountain pen.

The material of the point makes a difference. Experience shows that the material which gives the best performance coupled with durability and resistance to corrosion is 14K gold or some other high-quality gold alloy, tipped with a bit of iridium alloy to keep the point from wearing down. Next best, though not nearly so satisfactory, is an iridium-tipped "special alloy" point, high in silver content and usually gold-plated. These points are often as good as gold points when they are first put into service, but they are likely to feed ink unevenly as they grow older.

The price of these pens generally runs around \$1, and their place in the fountain pen picture is obvious. For

those who are always losing their pens, alloy-point pens are good buys. On the other hand, they are a poor investment for those who keep their pens for years.

Pens with steel points run to about the same price as silver-alloy pens. These can be very good—for what they are. But they never write quite as smoothly as gold-point pens, though they are superior to alloy pens for long-time use. One important advantage of the *Esterbrook* line of steel pens is the wide variety of interchangeable points (33 are advertised) available for it.

Another type of pen point is the stylus variety, not much used for ordinary writing, but favored by those who want an instrument that will write in any direction with the same flexibility as a pencil.

Gold pens come in various point sizes. Very small points, generally found on relatively cheap pens, are often unsatisfactory, and pens equipped with them often have a tendency to leak. "Jumbo" points are pure ostentation. They perform no better than do points of ordinary size.

Some manufacturers have made various modifications of the conventional point to produce "streamlined" pens. In the famous *Parker 51*, the very small point is covered, except at the very tip, by a shaped plastic sheath which is an extension of the barrel.

Because of its shape, the point is

very inflexible—still another disadvantage for those who like the flexibility of conventional gold points.

The *Waterman's* streamliner is much like the *Parker*, except that the tiny point protrudes a little more from the barrel. On first sight, the whole thing looks like a mistake, but if you like the appearance of the tiny point stuck half-way out of the long holder, and if you are satisfied with the "feel" of it, the pen will perform well enough, and without the need for a special ink.

Whereas *Parker* and *Waterman's* use extra-small points to achieve the streamlined effect, *Sheaffer* does it with an extra-large point. The *Sheaffer* point starts like a conical collar, flush with the barrel of the pen, but the portion near the apex is cut away on one side. This makes for a rather stiff, inflexible point. And it's likely to lead to inky fingers until the user trains himself to hold the pen well above the point portion.

Assuming that the point and feed mechanism are satisfactory, the most important thing to look for is ink capacity. A pen with a small ink capacity is likely to run dry so often as to be a nuisance. Other factors being equal, the more ink a pen holds, the less often it will run dry just when you need it. Twenty drops (about one cubic centimeter) is considered the minimum acceptable capacity; there's no reason why a well-designed pen can't hold at least

twice as much. The pens tested ranged in capacity from .7 to 1.7 cubic centimeters (about 15 to 35 average drops).

One thing to be noted in this connection is that the tendency to streamline is robbing fountain pens of normal ink capacity. Some of the *Eversharp* pens, for example, had very inadequate capacity.

The design and material of the feed are important if the point is to receive a steady ink flow. Hard rubber feeds are superior to plastic. You can usually recognize a plastic feed by its glossy surface.

The innercap — often lacking in cheap pens, and sometimes even in expensive ones — seals the pen point from the air when the pen is closed. This prevents evaporation of the ink, and permits the pen to start writing as soon as it touches the paper. Slip-on tops, often found on high-priced pens, don't have innercaps.

Most pens hold their ink supplies in a small rubber sac, inside the barrel. Generally, this is filled by means of a lever on the side of the pen. On some pens, a plunger at the top of the barrel is operated for filling. Though this is a detail, anyone who has had to grope in the dark under a hot radiator for the tiny cap which must be removed before some plunger pens can be filled, will testify to their inconvenience.

If you carry your pen clipped in your pocket, see that the clip is flex-

ible enough to retain its grip, and is well anchored to the cap.

This covers the working parts of the pen. For the rest, you're paying largely for prestige, advertising, and jewelry. Many of the big-name manufacturers advertise their high-priced items, but also produce lower-priced lines which are essentially the same, except for trimming. Usually the gold trim on a pen comes high—far higher than the cost of the gold and workmanship involved.

CU's ratings of fountain pens are based on tests and examinations by a fountain pen expert. Two or more samples of each brand and price line were examined. Prices were those prevailing in Fall, 1946.

Iridium-Tipped Gold Pens

BEST BUY

Venus (American Pencil Co., Hoboken, N. J.). \$3.50. Conventional 14K gold point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality good; ink capacity average. Good design and construction, with pen points of good quality and workmanship. Rubber feed; points well set. Writing started easily; minimum leakage. Style conservative but good.

ACCEPTABLE

(Listed in order of price, cheapest first, but note comments)

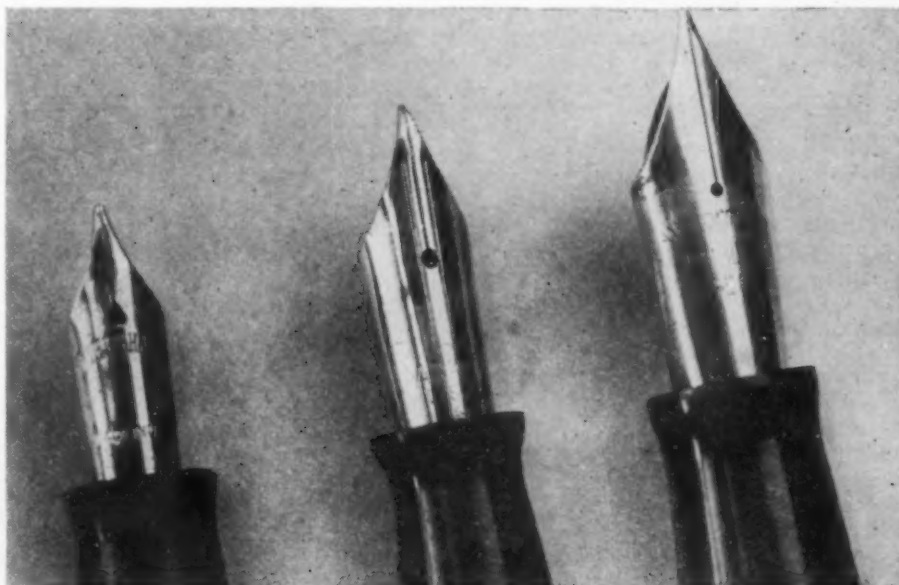
Conklin (Conklin Pen Co., Chicago). \$2.75. Conventional 14K gold point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality good; ink capacity low. Fair construction. Would be good value except for plastic section and feed, the latter too short. Pens had some tendency to leak.

Sheaffer Cadet (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co., Fort Madison, Iowa). \$2.75. Conventional 14K gold point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with no innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity small. Rubber feed with plastic section. Dries out rather quickly. Low ink capacity and tendency to dry out limit pen's value.

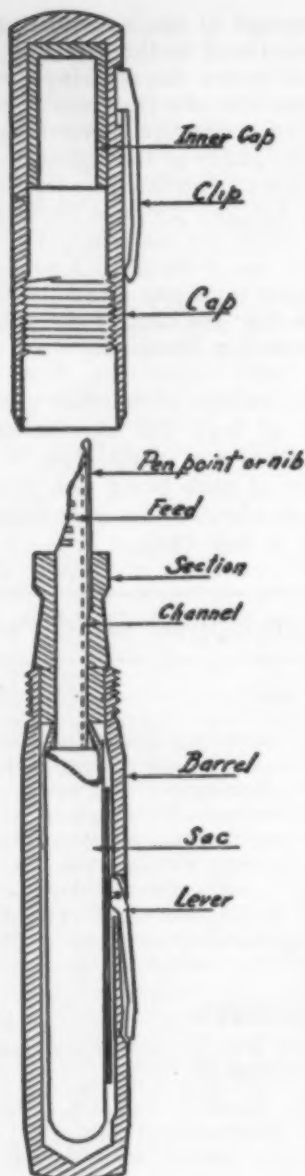
Peerless (Peerless Pen Co., NYC). \$2.95. Conventional 14K gold point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing good; ink capacity above average. Pen threaded at base of section, near the point, rather than at the base of the barrel. Edges of this threaded portion chipped on samples tested, making innercap worthless. Construction fair.

Venus (see "Best Buys").

Morrison (Morrison Fountain Pen Co., NYC). \$3.95. Conventional 14K gold



Conventional-type fountain pen points come in a wide range of sizes (left to right): the small *EVERSHARP* pen point, the regular size *PARKER* pen point and the *WATERMAN* "1003."



CROSS SECTION OF A CONVENTIONAL FOUNTAIN PEN.

A good inner cap keeps the point from drying out, assuring immediate starting. The clip should be firmly anchored; it should have enough spring to grip tightly without bending out of shape. The cap should fit firmly over the pen. Gold is the best material for the pen point, and hard rubber makes the best feed, though other materials are used for both in cheaper pens. The channel feeds ink from the sac to the point. The sac should be as large as the barrel size permits, for maximum ink capacity. Some pens look big, but hold little ink because of their small sacs. The lever should be well sunk into the barrel so that accidental contact does not pull it out.

How to Select a Pen

Whatever pen you buy, it is suggested that you follow this procedure in making your selection:

1. Ask the clerk to show you all the pens he has in the general price line you are planning to buy, and see which of these have the general size, color and writing point you prefer.

2. Unscrew the cap and, without taking it off, screw it back into place. Reject any pen on which the screw action does not come to a definite stop at the end of the thread.

3. Remove the cap and look inside it to see whether there is an inner cap. Then place the cap in writing position. It should fit firmly and easily, with no tendency to fall off.

4. Hold the barrel of the pen with one hand, and with the other, try to move the point and the section to see whether either is loose. There should be no motion of the point or the section.

5. Inspect the tip of the pen point closely from the inside. There should be a bit of iridium or other hard alloy soldered to the tip. A properly made point will last through a lifetime of wear; a point without a hard tip, even if it is made of gold, will soon wear, and the pen will begin to scratch.

6. Try to insert the edge of a thin paper between the point and the feed. If they are fitted properly, you should not be able to

slide the paper in.

7. Without dipping the pen into ink, try "writing" with it on a piece of paper. There should be no scratching.

8. Dip the pen and wipe off excess ink, then give it a writing test. See first that it fits the hand easily; a pen which is too large and heavy adds to the effort of writing; too small a pen cramps the hand. Some persons prefer fairly flexible points, others like them firm; some like fine points, others prefer stubby ones; if you are buying the pen for someone else, you'll have to use your judgment, of course. In that case, however, it's a good idea to get assurance that the pen may be exchanged if the recipient finds the point unsatisfactory.

9. If the clerk will permit it, fill the pen with ink or with water, and then empty it, counting the drops. The larger the capacity, the less often you'll have to refill, of course. Rubber-sac pens should hold at least 20 drops, preferably more. Some vacuum types, like the *Sheaffer Triumph* hold as much as 40 drops.

10. If you make use of the clip on a fountain pen, check to see that the one on the pen you buy is well anchored, and not likely to break off. Its edges should be smooth, and its grip firm enough to permit a strong hold on the pocket to which it is attached.

point; screw-on cap with innercap. Plunger-type filling requiring removal of barrel; rather messy. Writing quality good; ink capacity average. Construction good but styling rather poor.

Eversharp (Eversharp, Inc., Chicago). \$3.95. Pen had conventional gold-alloy point. Lever-type filling. Modified innercap is not successful because of poor finishing at contact end. Writing quality good; ink capacity very small in some samples, average or above in others.

Eversharp (Eversharp, Inc.). \$5. Conventional 14K gold point; lever-type filling. Writing quality good. Point somewhat larger than that on \$3.95 Eversharp above, but similar in other respects.

Parker Vacumatic (Parker Pen Co., Janesville, Wisc.). \$8.75. Pen had conventional gold-alloy point; plunger-

type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality good; ink capacity average. Fairly good construction.

Waterman's Citation (L. E. Waterman Co., NYC). \$8.75. Gold-alloy point. Points very small and partially covered by section. Lever-type filling; slip-on cap. Writing quality good for those who like this type of pen; may be inconvenient to some. Ink capacity above average. Good construction.

Eversharp (Eversharp, Inc.). \$9.75. Similar in all respects to \$5 Eversharp described above, except for gold-filled cap.

Waterman's "1003" (L. E. Waterman Co.). \$10. Pen had gold-alloy point. Points very much larger than standard. Lever-type filling; screw-on cap with inner cap. Writing quality good; ink capacity above average. Good design and construction. Writing started

easily. Extra-large point and thick barrel might make this pen awkward except for those who have fairly large hands.

Parker 51 (Parker Pen Co.). \$12.50. Pen had gold-alloy point. Point very small and covered by section except at tip. Plunger-type filling; slip-on cap. Writing quality good but stiff; good only for those who like this type of pen. Ink capacity above average. Special feed section designed to retain overflow of ink.

Sheaffer Valiant (W. A. Sheaffer Pen Co.). \$12.50. Large, two-tone 14K gold point of special design. Plunger-type filling; screw-on cap. Writing quality good but very stiff. Ink capacity above average. Very good construction. Because of unusual construction and styling, this pen may be inconvenient and messy for some users.

Waterman's "1352" (L. E. Waterman Co.). \$13.50. Conventional, special gold-alloy point. Lever-type filling; slip-on metal cap. Some difficulty in starting since lack of effective innercap tends to dry out ink. Writing quality good; ink capacity above average. Good construction. Minimum leakage.

Waterman's Stateleigh (L. E. Waterman Co.). \$13.50. Very similar to \$8.75 Waterman's listed above except for metal cap.

Iridium-Tipped Alloy Pens

BEST BUYS

Universal V100 (Universal Fountain Pen & Pencil Co., NYC). \$1.40. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity above average. Good construction. A good pen in this price range.

Stratford Regency (Salz Bros., Inc., NYC). \$1. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity average. Fair construction.

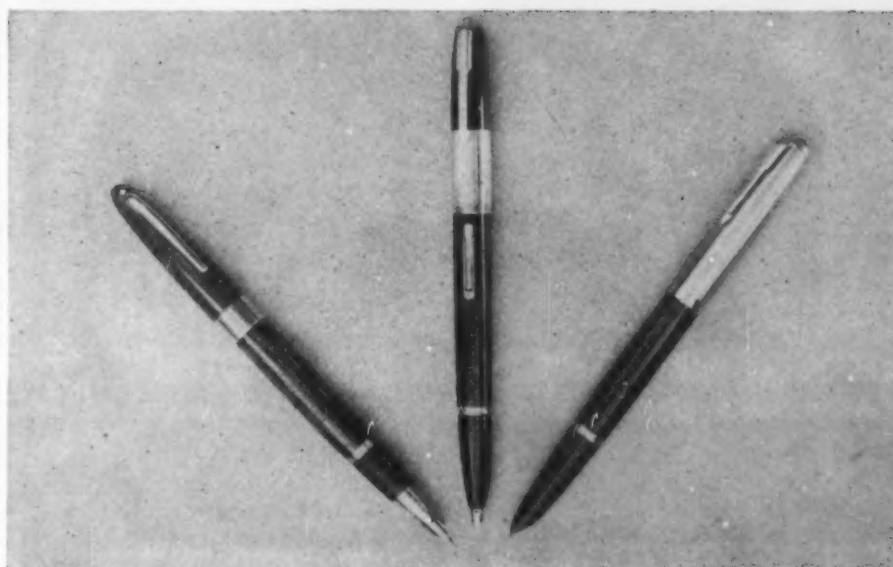
ACCEPTABLE

(Listed in order of price, but note comments)

Guvnor (manufacturer not stated). 89¢. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap without innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity small. Poor construction.

Unbranded (purchased in Woolworth's). 93¢. Conventional point; plunger-type filling; screw-on cap without innercap. Very stiff points; ink capacity above average. Very poor construction and workmanship throughout.

Weaver Deluxe 100 (David Kahn, Inc., North Bergen, N. J.). \$1. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair;



"STREAMLINING" is achieved in different ways by the various manufacturers. The **SHEAFFER VALIANT** (left) does it by means of an oversized point set flush with the barrel. On the **WATERMAN'S CITATION** (center) the section extends part way over a small, protruding point. The **PARKER 51's** point (right) is all but covered by the plastic barrel. Not all persons like the relatively inflexible points of these streamlined pens; try them before you buy.

rather flexible point; ink capacity average. Fair construction. One of pens tested leaked badly because the section tube split along the mold-line.

Stratford Regency (see "Best Buys").

Stratford (Salz Bros.). 83¢. Conventional point; plunger-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity average. Body made of poor quality injection-molded plastic. Poor clip.

Arnold (R. L. Arnold Pen Co., Petersburg, Va.). \$1.08. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity small. Relatively poor construction and workmanship; trimmings flimsy, fell off.

Eagle 2111 (Eagle Pencil Co., NYC). \$1.15. Conventional point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair. Rather flexible point; ink capacity small. Fair construction.

Universal V100 (see "Best Buys").

Stainless Steel Pens

BEST BUY

Esterbrook (Esterbrook Steel Pen Manufacturing Co., Camden, N. J.). \$1.50. Conventional stainless steel point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity small. Good construction. Available in a wide variety of points, with interchangeable steel refills costing 25¢. Iridium-tipped steel refill points

also available for 75¢. An excellent value if this type pen serves your needs.

ACCEPTABLE

Esterbrook (see "Best Buys").

Permapoint (Eberhard Faber Pencil Co., NYC). No. 1201, \$1.11; No. 1401, \$1.50. The two price lines appeared to be almost identical. Conventional iridium-tipped stainless steel point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Innercap of little value on some samples because untrimmed overflow from molding prevents proper fit against section. Writing quality fair. Ink capacity average. Trimmings of stainless steel, tend to fall off. Poor workmanship.

Stylus Pens

BEST BUY

Universal Stylo-Graph (Universal Fountain Pen & Pencil Co., NYC). \$1.40. Stainless steel needle-tube point, lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity above average.

ACCEPTABLE

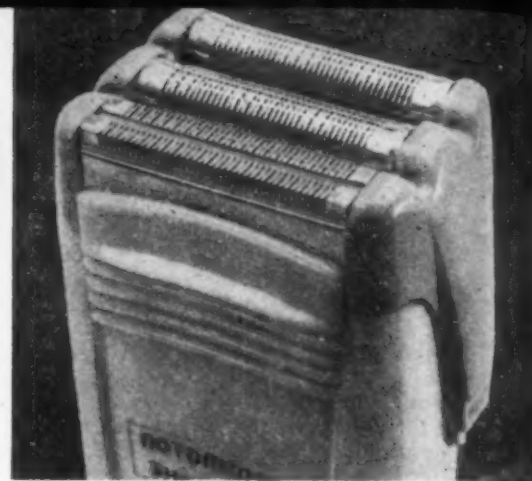
Universal Stylo-Graph (see "Best Buy"). **Inkograph** (Inkograph Co., NYC). \$2. Gold needle-tube point; lever-type filling; screw-on cap with innercap. Writing quality fair; ink capacity average. Very closely comparable with **Universal Stylo-Graph**.



REMINGTON DUAL 705 (\$15.75), gave a close shave but would not trim long hairs.



REMINGTON THREESOME 79 (\$17.50), also gave a close shave and would not trim long hairs.



NEW REMINGTON FOURSOME 78 (\$19.50), gave a close shave and trimmed long hairs well.

ELECTRIC SHAVERS

First rule in purchasing an electric shaver; regardless what brand you choose, be sure to buy it on trial with a return privilege. Here are CU's ratings of seven models

In the numerous tests that CU has made on electric shavers both before the war and now, one fact stands out clearly; whereas one man may find a particular make of shaver very irritating, another may get entirely satisfactory shaves by using the same instrument. More so than with most products tested, usefulness is markedly affected by individual reaction.

Seven brands of electric shavers—three samples of each brand—priced from \$15 to \$19.75, were tested this year, and CU technicians (and the CU "shaving squad") still find that not even the best can be expected to give as close a shave as an ordinary safety razor with a good blade.

However, for those individuals who ordinarily have trouble with a safety razor—who cut themselves or find their skin irritated—the electric shaver may offer a good solution. But while some users claim that they have found a good electric shaver less irritating than razor blades, others cannot use them at all.

TRIAL PERIOD NEEDED

In shopping for an electric razor, try to buy it at a store where several different brands are available. CU strongly recommends that you purchase the shaver with the understanding that you can exchange it or get your money back within a reasonable trial period (one cutlery store in New York makes this a reg-

ular practice at a nominal service charge). It takes some time to get used to an electric shaver, and it may be two or three weeks before you can be sure that a shaver is or is not satisfactory. Some manufacturers have argued in their advertisements that their brands dispense with the need for a trial period, but do not be too much impressed with such claims.

In comparison with the wet-razor shaving process, the electric method has the following advantages and disadvantages:

ADVANTAGES:

1. Some persons who find razor shaving irritating, consider electric shaving as a preferable method. This may be especially true when only cold water is available for lathering.
2. Some men find electric shaving faster than the lathering-razor-shaving process. An occasional user reports that he can get an electric shave in as little as two or three minutes. Others may take up to 15 minutes for a shave.
3. One can shave with an electric shaver even when fully dressed. Also, it is not necessary to confine this activity to the bathroom—a special advantage in homes where there is a single bathroom and many claimants for it at shaving time.

DISADVANTAGES:

1. Some persons, such as those with very dark beards, may not be

able to get a clean enough shave, since electric shavers generally do not shave as closely as razors.

2. Electricity must be available.

3. All electric shavers make some noise; some quite a lot.

4. It may be difficult to shave with an electric shaver in damp, hot weather.

The cost of keeping an electric shaver in repair is sometimes greater than the cost of new razor blades. Repairs which are due directly to wear should average less than a dollar a year. Dropping, however, is almost certain to break the plastic case and is likely to damage the shaving head—both expensive repair items. The cost of electricity is negligible.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The postwar *Packard*—the most expensive shaver tested (\$19.75)—is radically different from the pre-war *Packard*. The new model appears to be a fairly close copy of the *Remington*. It has four identical heads and is called "Twin-Dual" rather than "Foursome." The prewar model had a circular head (resembling a small sieve) with a whirling blade behind it.

The new *Schick 270* has two heads in place of the one on the *Schick Col-onel*, and the through-slots which were the distinctive feature of the single head, are replaced by elongated

holes which are a sort of cross between holes and slots.

Although considered old-fashioned by some, the *Schick Colonel 240*, with its single slotted head, has two virtues not possessed by any other shaver. It is the best shaver for trimming long hair (around the ears, the neck, the mustache). Also, the free passage of stubble through the slots prevents irritation to some faces. The *Schick 240* is the only shaver so designed that the shaving head can, and does, get out of alignment. When this happens, the shaver may either tug at the stubble, or fail to operate at all.

The process of realignment is very simple, but it is best performed by shaver servicemen because they are equipped with a stroboscope, an instrument with which they can observe the alignment while the shaver is in operation.

The pre-war *Remington Foursome 78* has been redesigned and renamed the "*New Remington Foursome 78* with Twin Blue Streak Head." Actually, the new *Foursome* now has only three heads—the third head being so designed that it looks like two heads. This third head does, however, add greatly to the usefulness of the *Foursome* as compared with the *Threesome* and the *Dual*. It is designed with slits (similar to those on the *Schick Colonel 240* single-head shaver) which make it possible to trim long hair.

TYPES OF MOTORS

All shavers tested, except the *Sunbeam Shavemaster*, operated with a very elementary type of motor—easily built, durable and easily repaired. This motor has one principal fault: the tendency to slow down after only a few months' use. When this happens, the "points" (electrical contacts) must be adjusted to the proper distance required for most efficient operation. Although electric shaver servicemen will perform this readjustment at a nominal fee, so little skill is needed for the operation that the average person should be able to do the job with a screwdriver, using trial-and-error methods. CU technicians advise users to readjust the points or have them readjusted two or three times a year, whether or not any slowing is apparent, since the slowing-down process takes place so gradually that the user may not even be aware of it.

The *Sunbeam Shavemaster* was the only shaver tested which had a regular universal motor with arma-

ture, commutator and brushes. Though this motor is superior to the others in its very low noise level, repairs are a relatively expensive proposition. The *Shavemaster* has one notable fault: it is very heavy for a shaver (13 ounces), and some users may find that its use tires them excessively.

Inspection of the construction of each shaver revealed none that should not give satisfactory service over a period of years.

HOW CU TESTED

Use tests were made by a number of CU staff members who used the various instruments, one after the other, over a period of several weeks. The following characteristics were noted: pulling, pain, ease of removing individual long hairs, ease of handling, adaptability to trimming, time of shave, presence of after-burn and closeness of shave.

Upon completion of the use tests, the shavers were given accelerated life tests under controlled conditions, during which they were regularly inspected and checked for possible loss of shaving ability. These tests (equivalent to two years' use) indicated that wear is a relatively small factor.

Each electric shaver was also given an electric leakage test to determine safety from shock. The shavers tested were found to be entirely free of shock hazard.

All shavers tested this year were of the ac-dc type, which causes radio interference. In prewar years, many brands were available for a-c only. These sold for considerably less than the ac-dc type and did not cause static on a radio.

ACCEPTABLE

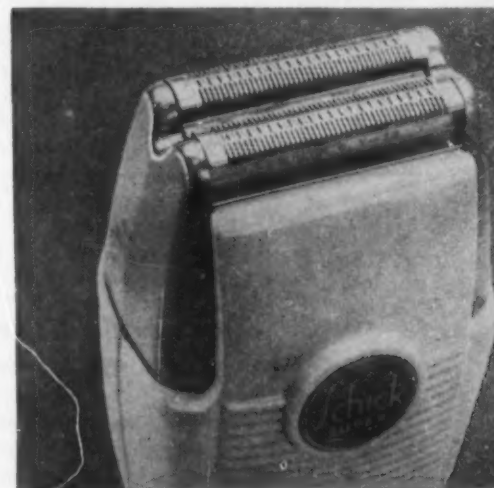
(The following shavers are listed in the estimated order in which CU recommends that they be tried out by anyone planning to buy an electric shaver. Even the last shaver on the list, however, may turn out to be the best for an occasional user.)

New Remington Foursome 78 With Blue Streak Head (Remington Rand, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn.) \$19.50. Weight, 11 oz. Gave close shave. Good long-hair trimmer, but irritating to some faces. Bulky to handle. Had good removable hair pockets. Noisy.

Sunbeam Shavemaster RG (Chicago Flexible Shaft Co., Chicago) \$16.70. Weight, 13 oz. Closest shaver of all tested. Heaviest and quietest of all shavers tested. Fair long-hair trimmer, but irritating to some faces. Poor retention of clippings (clippings keep falling down during shaving). Inconvenient to clean. The only shaver which must be sharpened occasionally



▲ The *SCHICK COLONEL 240* (\$15).
▼ The *SCHICK SUPER 270* (\$18).



▲ The *SUNBEAM SHAVE MASTER RG* (\$16.70).
▼ The *PACKARD TWIN-DUAL* (\$19.75).



(instructions and compound for sharpening included with shaver).

Schick Colonel 240 (single head) (Schick, Inc., Stamford, Conn.). \$15. Weight, 8 oz. Gave least close shave of all shavers tested. Excellent long-hair trimmer, but irritating to some faces. Hinged pockets for retention of clippings. Relatively quiet. Edges caused irritation when the shaver was held at an incorrect angle; therefore, learning period required. The only shaver which required alignment (see text).

Remington Threesome 79 (Remington Rand, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn.). \$17.50. Weight, 11 oz. Close shaver. Very poor long-hair trimmer, irritating to some faces, good retention of clippings, removable pockets, noisy.

Remington Dual 705 (Remington Rand, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn.). \$15.75. Weight, 10 oz. Close shaver. Could not trim long hairs. Irritating to some

faces. Good retention of clippings. Removable pockets. Noisy.

Packard Twin-Dual (Lectro Products, Inc., Milford, Conn.). \$19.75. Weight, 11 oz. Close shaver. Poor long-hair trimmer. Irritating to most of the testers who tried it. Good retention of clippings. Removable pockets. Fast shaver, but noisy.

NOT ACCEPTABLE

(The following brand is rated "Not Acceptable" because two out of three samples tested were improperly adjusted. Description is based on the correctly-adjusted sample.)

Schick Super 270 (Schick, Inc., Stamford, Conn.). \$18. Weight, 10 oz. Close shaver. Good long-hair trimmer, irritating to some faces (painful tugs from some samples probably due to misalignment). Excellent retention of clippings, hinged pockets. Fast and relatively quiet.

DENTIFRICES

CU discusses dentifrice ingredients, and rates 108 brands of pastes, powders, and liquids

Pebeco's brief period as a holder of a place on CU's list of "Acceptable" tooth pastes has come to an abrupt end with the end of the war and of wartime shortages. And *Pebeco* is back in its prewar "Not Acceptable" spot, now that the poisonous chemical, potassium chlorate—absent at the time of CU's last test in 1944—is back in *Pebeco's* formula.

Aside from this, results of tests of 66 tooth pastes, 35 tooth powders and 7 liquid dentifrices show no startling deviations from the conclusions drawn about them in CU's 1944 tests. For the most part, even the prices are unchanged, though there are a few notable exceptions.

Milk-i-dent, for example, has lost its place on the "Best Buy" list because its price rose from 10¢ a tube in 1944 to 20¢ for the same size in 1946. *Oraline's* price rose from 14¢ in 1944 to 25¢ in 1946. The manufacturers of *Mi 31* tooth paste accomplished the same effect without changing the 25¢-a-tube price by decreasing the size of the tube from its former 5¼ ounces to its present 2½ ounces.

No nationally advertised brands of pastes or powders are on CU's "Best Buy" list. Considering the low price of the simple ingredients necessary to make a good dentifrice and the high price of the advertising required to sell it in great volume, this is not

too surprising. Basically, dentifrices consist of a mild abrasive (such as precipitated chalk), a detergent (soap or a synthetic), and flavoring (usually saccharin and a flavoring oil) to make the dentifrice taste good. Tooth pastes contain, in addition, a "binder" such as glycerin for pasty consistency and a lubricating oil to aid in extruding the paste from the tube.

To these, enterprising manufacturers may add practically anything they or their advertising agencies can dream up, to aid in promoting sales. *Pepsodent's* much-publicized *Irium* is nothing more than a synthetic detergent similar to those used in many non-soap shampoos. Milk of magnesia, a common ingredient in dentifrices, does neither harm nor good. It does not alkalize the mouth except very temporarily, which is fortunate since the natural, normal and desirable condition of a healthy mouth is slightly acid. Any germicides contained in dentifrices are likely to do more harm than good. If they are actually effective—fortunately most are not—they can harm the delicate tissues of the mouth. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, bacteria play a useful role in mouth hygiene, and their elimination is neither necessary nor desirable.

What can a dentifrice do for you? If you like its taste, it can make

brushing the teeth a more pleasant chore than it otherwise would be. Furthermore, it gives the tooth brush some slight aid in polishing the tooth surfaces. And that's all—no matter what the ads may say.

And what the ads say is plenty. If you took their word for it, you'd need a whole rack of dentifrices to avoid or cure the oral ailments which lurk nearby. You might be the victim of halitosis, acidosis, gingivitis or just plain bacteria. Your teeth might be covered with film, lack whiteness, or have tiny crevices at the gum line. Even worse are the practical effects of not using the right dentifrices. You might lose your job, or lose your secretary. You might be a wallflower or a lone wolf. You could, even be left at the altar. But just one quick brushing with the correct dentifrice, and you're miraculously changed from Mr. Hyde to Dr. Jekyll.

Would that it were so! But since it isn't, CU can rate dentifrices only as *dentifrices*.

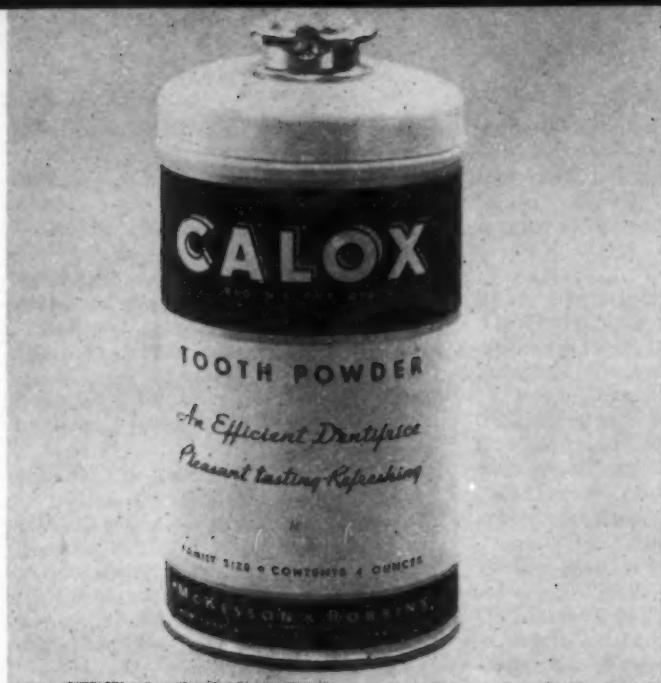
In all, 108 brands of dentifrices—two samples of each brand—were examined by CU technicians.

The 66 brands of tooth paste were examined for abrasiveness, acidity or alkalinity, consistency and ease of extrusion from the tube, the presence of starch, and for any corrosion of the container which might result in contamination of the contents.

The 35 brands of tooth powder were tested for the presence of sodium perborate or other similar oxygen-liberating compounds in addition to tests for abrasiveness, acidity or alkalinity, starch, and lumpiness.

The seven liquids, none of which contained any abrasives, were tested only for acidity or alkalinity and consistency.

A method described in the Federal Specifications for government purchase of dentifrices was used in testing for abrasiveness. The abrasive action is measured by rubbing a paste made up from the dentifrice over a glass slide, using a definite number of strokes and a measured pressure. The washed slides are then examined under a light beam. The tests showed excessive abrasiveness in five products: *Bonded* and *Sani-kleen* pastes and *Mi 31*, *Pyrozide* and *Vince* powders. It should be noted here that dental experts consider tooth brushing technique as important as the dentifrice in contributing to harmful abrasion of the teeth. Most authorities agree that the scrubbing brush technique is unsatis-



CALOX Tooth Powder, costing 69¢ for an eight ounce can, was rated "Not Acceptable" because it contained sodium perborate.



The samples of **PEBECO** Tooth Paste tested contained potassium chlorate, a poisonous substance which has no place in a dentifrice.

factory, both from the point of view of abrasion and in the fact that it does not cleanse efficiently. A more satisfactory method is to start with the brush bristles parallel to the sides of the teeth and pointed toward the gum line. The brush is pressed against the teeth and rolled so that the bristles sweep past the gum line and over the sides of the teeth.

Federal Specifications set a limit on the degree of acidity or alkalinity permitted in the dentifrices the government buys. While none of the dentifrices tested exceeded the limit on the acid side, a number were found to be slightly more alkaline than the limit set by the Specifications. This slight excess was not judged harmful for the vast majority of users, though there may be some persons unduly sensitive to alkalis to whom these dentifrices might cause irritation. Dentifrices which exceeded the Specification's alkalinity limits are, therefore, rated as "Acceptable," but listed separately.

Tooth powders containing sodium perborate or similar products have been rated "Not Acceptable." The American Dental Association considers this substance unsuitable for general use in a dentifrice since it "may give rise to 'chemical burns' of the oral mucosa." Sodium perborate does have a place in the treatment of some mouth infections such as Vincent's angina ("trench mouth"), but such treatment should be under the supervision of a dentist. It should be pointed out, further,

that perborate does not act as a prophylactic, and that its use will not prevent mouth infection.

All the powders and liquids tested were free-flowing, but a few of the pastes were not quite ideal in consistency. Several were rather thin, though not so thin as to make them inconvenient in use. One brand—*Elizabeth Arden Superfine*—had a chewing-gum consistency which made it rather difficult to squeeze from the tube. In several others, there was some tendency for the liquid portions to separate from the solids after long standing, but again, not enough to be seriously bothersome.

Some dentifrices contained starch, presumably to improve consistency. Most dentists are agreed that the presence of starch in small amounts is not generally harmful. But some feel that, in certain conditions, even the very small possibility that the starch may become lodged in a dental crevice and contribute to dental decay is to be avoided. For this reason, the presence of starch is noted wherever it was found.

With the qualifications noted above, one brand of dentifrices is just about as good as another on the "Acceptable" list. One major difference is flavor, which is, of course, a matter of personal preference. Since pleasant flavor is one of the chief functions of a dentifrice, you may as well get one that you like. The only thing to watch out for—since there are a few persons sensitive to particular

flavoring oils—is not to get one that burns your mouth. If you notice a burning sensation at any time, you would do well to switch brands.

As for the choice between pastes and powders, again it is a matter of personal preference. Powders are on the whole, slightly more economical. But since the range in price in both pastes and powders is great, the chances are that you can be economical—or extravagant—either way.

In the ratings which follow, dentifrices are listed in order of cost per ounce (figures in parentheses) in each classification. Prices given are those prevailing at time of purchase (Fall, 1946).

Tooth Pastes

BEST BUYS

(In order of increasing cost per ounce—figure in parentheses.)

- Scientific Brand 1005 (S. H. Kress & Co., NYC). 13¢ for 2.7 oz. tube (4.6¢).
- Spearmint (Allen Products, Chicago). 9¢ for 1-4/5 oz. tube (5¢).
- The Fair (The Fair, Chicago). 20¢ for 3 3/4 oz. tube (5.2¢).
- SVB with Magnesium Hydroxide (Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney, Inc., St. Louis). 20¢ for 3 3/4 oz. tube (5.2¢).
- Dr. Kyle's (Sheffield Co., New London, Conn.). 14¢ for 2.4 oz. tube (5.6¢).
- Filene's Own Dental Cream for Massaging the Gums (Wm. Filene's Sons Co., Boston). 19¢ for 3-1/5 oz. tube (5.9¢).

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

ACCEPTABLE

(In alphabetical order but note comments. Figures in parentheses represent cost per oz.)

A•C (Drake Laboratories, Philadelphia). 29¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (7.7¢).

A.D.S. Dental Twins (American Drug-gists Syndicate, Inc., NYC). 37¢ for two 2¼ oz. tubes (8.2¢).

Best (Whelan Drug Co., NYC). 29¢ for 3-1/5 oz. tube (9.1¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Böst (Bost, Inc., Indianapolis). 29¢ for 2.4 oz. tube (12.1¢). Contained starch.

Brytor (Stineway Drug Stores, Chicago). 23¢ for 2¼ oz. tube (10.2¢).

Colgate (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co., Jersey City). 37¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (9.9¢).

Co-op (National Co-operatives, Inc., Chicago). 23¢ for 3-1/5 oz. tube (7.2¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Detoxol (Wm. S. Merrell Co., Cincinnati). 50¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (11.7¢).

Dr. Kyle's (see "Best Buys").

Dr. West's (Weco Products Co., Chicago). 17¢ for 2 oz. tube (8.5¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature. Contained starch.

Filene's Own Dental Cream for Massaging the Gums (see "Best Buys").

Forhan's (Zonite Products Corp., New Brunswick, N. J.). 39¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (12.5¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Iodent No. 1 (Iodent Co., Detroit). 39¢ for 3.1 oz. tube (12.6¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Iodent No. 2 (Iodent Co.). 39¢ for 3-3/5 oz. tube (10.8¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Listerine (Lambert Pharmacal Co., St. Louis). 33¢ for 3.6 oz. tube (9.2¢).

Macy's Foamy (R. H. Macy & Co., NYC). 23¢ for 4 oz. tube (5.8¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Macy's Soapless (R. H. Macy & Co.). 24¢ for 3 oz. tube (8¢).

Milk-i-dent (Trade Laboratories, Inc., Newark, N. J.). 20¢ for 2.5 oz. tube (7.8¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Oraline (S. S. White Dental Mfg. Co., Philadelphia). 37¢ for 4 oz. tube (9.3¢); 25¢ for 2 oz. tube (12.5¢).

Pepsodent (Lever Brothers Co., Chicago). 39¢ for 3 oz. tube (13¢).

PMG Gilbert's (Gilbert Laboratories, Morristown, N. J.). 43¢ for 2 oz. tube (21.5¢). Strong medicinal odor.

PS Mint Flavored (Associated Merchandising Corp., NYC). 21¢ for 2¼ oz. tube (7.6¢). Contained starch.

PS for Massaging the Gums (Associated Merchandising Corp.). 21¢ for 2¼ oz. tube (9.3¢).

Royal (S. S. Pierce Co., Boston). 31¢ for 2.6 oz. tube (11.9¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Scientific Brand 1005 (see "Best Buys").

Schulte Mint (A. Schulte, NYC). 23¢ for 2.5 oz. tube (9¢).

Spearmint (see "Best Buys").

Stratford (Sheffield Co.). 29¢ for 2¼ oz.

tube (12.9¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

SVB with Magnesium Hydroxide (see "Best Buys").

SVB for Massaging Gums (Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney, Inc.). 20¢ for 3-1/5 oz. tube (6.1¢).

The Fair for Massaging Gums (The Fair). 20¢ for 3-1/5 oz. tube (6.1¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature. Slightly but not excessively abrasive.

The Fair (see "Best Buys").

TMC (The May Dept. Stores Co., St. Louis). 29¢ for 4½ oz. tube (7¢).

Wards Dental Cream with Magnesium Hydroxide (Montgomery Ward). Cat. No.—3726. 20¢ plus postage for 2½ oz. tube (7.8¢).

Wards Mint Flavored Tooth Paste (Montgomery Ward). Cat. No.—3725. 20¢ plus postage for 2.6 oz. tube (7.5¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Worcester Salt (Worcester Salt Co., NYC). 33¢ for 3 oz. tube (11¢).

The following are "Acceptable" though they were more alkaline than allowed by Federal Specifications for Tooth Pastes. Listed in order of increasing alkalinity.

Britten (United Drug Co., Boston). 39¢ for 4½ oz. tube (8.7¢).

Elizabeth Arden Superfine (Elizabeth Arden, NYC). 35¢ for 2 oz. tube (17.5¢). Paste was hard to extrude from tube.

SVB (Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney, Inc.). 20¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (5.2¢).

Phillips' Milk of Magnesia (Sterling Drug, Inc., NYC). 29¢ for 3.6 oz. tube (8.1¢). Contained starch.

Filene's Own with Magnesium Hydroxide (Wm. Filene's Sons Co.). 19¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (5.1¢).

Orlis (Valentine Laboratories, Inc., Chicago). 29¢ for 2 oz. tube (14.5¢).

The Fair Special Formula for Removing Film (The Fair). 20¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (5.2¢). Contained starch.

Craig-Martin (Comfort Mfg. Co., Chicago). 25¢ for 5-1/5 oz. tube (4.8¢). Contained starch.

Squibb (E. R. Squibb & Sons, NYC). 37¢ for 3 oz. tube; 49¢ for 4 oz. tube (12.3¢).

Gimbels Milk of Magnesia (Gimbel Brothers, NYC). 22¢ for 3½ oz. tube (6.3¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Aywon (J. C. Penney Co., NYC). 25¢ for 3½ oz. tube (7.1¢).

PS With Magnesia (Associated Merchandising Corp.). 21¢ for 2½ oz. tube (8.4¢); 25¢ for 4½ oz. tube (5.6¢).

Melvin & Badger's Milk of Magnesia (Melvin & Badger Co., Boston). 25¢ for 2¼ oz. tube (9.1¢).

Kolynos (Whitehall Pharmacal Co., NYC). 39¢ for 2 oz. tube (19.5¢). Somewhat thin at room temperature.

Mi 31 (United Drug Co., Boston). 25¢ for 2½ oz. tube (10¢).

Macy's Alkalinizing (R. H. Macy & Co.). 33¢ for 5½ oz. tube (6¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Adoria (Kaufmann Department Stores, Inc., Pittsburgh). 15¢ for 4 oz. tube

(3.6¢). Tended to separate on standing.

Walgreen Magnesia (Walgreen Co., Chicago). 19¢ for 2½ oz. tube (7.6¢). Tended to separate slightly on standing.

Sears Approved Dental Cream Combined with Milk of Magnesia and Magnesium Hydroxide (Sears, Roebuck). Cat. No.—7310. 29¢ for 5 oz. tube (5.8¢). Contained starch.

Nevins (Nevins Drug Co., Philadelphia). 29¢ for 4½ oz. tube (6.4¢). Contained starch.

Ipana (Bristol-Myers Co., NYC). 39¢ for 2.6 oz. tube (15¢).

Klenzo (United Drug Co.). 39¢ for 3½ oz. tube (11.1¢).

Schulte with Magnesium Hydroxide (A. Schulte). 23¢ for 3 oz. tube (7.5¢).

McKesson's Magnesia (McKesson & Robbins, Inc., NYC). 19¢ for 2½ oz. tube (7.6¢).

Rexall Milk of Magnesia (United Drug Co.). 39¢ for 3¼ oz. tube (10.4¢). 23¢ for 2½ oz. tube (9.2¢). Slightly abrasive.

Castilla (Castilla Products, Inc., NYC). 45¢ for 1½ oz. tube (32.7¢).

NOT ACCEPTABLE

(The following were rated "Not Acceptable" for the reasons stated.)

Bonded (William A. Webster Co., Memphis, Tenn.). 29¢ for 4 oz. tube (7.3¢). Excessively abrasive. Contained starch.

Pebeco (Lehn & Fink Products Corp., Bloomfield, N. J.). 39¢ for 3.2 oz. tube (12.2¢). Contained potassium chlorate, a chemical which has no place in a dentifrice. Alkalinity slightly higher than maximum allowed by Federal Specifications.

Sanikleen (Sanikleen Products Co., Memphis, Tenn.). 20¢ for 5 oz. tube (4¢). Excessively abrasive. Contained starch.

Tooth Powders

BEST BUYS

(In order of increasing cost per ounce—figure in parentheses)

Macy's (R. H. Macy & Co.). 41¢ for 1 lb. cardboard container with metal ends (2.6¢).

Labratest (Labratest, Inc., Long Island City, N. Y.). 44¢ for 1 lb. cardboard container (2.8¢). Contained starch.

Wards (Montgomery Ward). Cat. No.—3727. 20¢ for 5 oz. cardboard container with metal ends (3.9¢).

Dr. Browns (Dr. Browns Laboratories, Brooklyn). 23¢ for 5½ oz. bottle (4.2¢).

Co-op (National Co-operatives, Inc.). 25¢ for 5 oz. cardboard container with metal ends (5¢).

Pro-phy-lac-tic (Pro-phy-lac-tic Brush Co., Florence, Mass.). 23¢ for 4½ oz. can (5.1¢).

Hudson's (J. L. Hudson Co., Detroit). 21¢ for 4 oz. can (5.3¢).

ACCEPTABLE

(In alphabetical order. Figures in parentheses represent cost per oz.)

- Britten** (United Drug Co., Boston). 45¢ for 6 oz. container (7.5¢).
Caroid (American Ferment Co., NYC). 39¢ for 2 oz. can (19.5¢).
Colgate (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co.). 37¢ for 4 oz. can (9.3¢).
Co-op. (see "Best Buys").
Dr. Brown's. (see "Best Buys").
Dr. Lyon's (Sterling Drug, Inc., NYC). 69¢ for 10 oz. can (6.9¢). Contained starch.
Drucker's Revelation (August E. Drucker Co., San Francisco). 34¢ for 2½ oz. can (12.9¢).
Gimbels (Gimbel Brothers). 25¢ for 4 oz. container (6.3¢).
Hudson's. (see "Best Buys").
Labratest. (see "Best Buys").
Larkin (Larkin Co., Buffalo). Cat. No. —146. 18¢ plus postage for 2¼ oz. can (8¢).
Macy's. (see "Best Buys").
Orlis (Valentine Laboratories, Inc.). 29¢ for 3 oz. container (9.7¢). Slightly, but not excessively abrasive.
Pebeco (Lehn & Fink Products Corp.). 23¢ for 3½ oz. can (6.6¢).
Pepsodent (Lever Brothers Co.). 39¢ for 4 oz. container (9.8¢); 21¢ for 2 oz. container (10.5¢).
Pro-phy-lac-tic. (see "Best Buys").
Py-co-pay (Pycopé, Inc., Jersey City). 79¢ for 7 oz. container (11.3¢).
Squibb (E. R. Squibb & Co.). 37¢ for 4½ oz. container (8.2¢).
TMC (May Dept. Stores Co.). 39¢ for 5 oz. container (7.8¢).
Wards. Cat. No.—3727. (see "Best Buys").

The following were "Acceptable" though they were more alkaline than allowed by Federal Specifications for Tooth Pastes. Listed in order of increasing alkalinity.

- Melvin & Badger's Italian Dentifrice** (Melvin & Badger Co.). 25¢ for 1 oz. jar (25¢). Slightly abrasive. Contained starch.
PS (Associated Merchandising Corp.). 18¢ for 4½ oz. container (4¢).
Iodent No. 2 (Iodent Co.). 37¢ for 5 oz. can (7.4¢).
Adoria (Kaufmann Department Stores, Inc.). 15¢ for 4½ oz. container (3.2¢).
Phillips' Milk of Magnesia (Chas. H. Phillips Chemical Co.). 34¢ for 5½ oz. container (6.2¢). Contained starch.
Sears Approved (Sears, Roebuck). Cat. No.—7358. 10¢ plus postage for 3½ oz. container (2.9¢).

NOT ACCEPTABLE

(For the reasons stated.)

- Albodon** (William R. Warner & Co., NYC). 39¢ for 4 oz. can (9.8¢). Contained sodium perborate or similar oxygen-liberating compound.
Calox (McKesson & Robbins, Inc.). 69¢ for 8 oz. can (8.6¢). Contained sodium perborate or similar oxygen-liberating compound. Slightly more alkaline than allowed by Federal Specifications.

Mi 31 (United Drug Co.). 29¢ for 3½ oz. container (8.3¢). Contained sodium perborate. Excessively abrasive.

Neutrox (Vick Chemical Co., Greensboro, N. C.). 49¢ for 85 grams (3 oz.) bottle (16.3¢). Contained sodium perborate.

Pyrozide (National Dental Co., Newark, N. J.). 79¢ for 4 oz. can (19.8¢). Excessively abrasive.

Rexall Milk of Magnesia (United Drug Co.). 29¢ for 3½ oz. container (8.3¢). Contained sodium perborate.

Vince (Vince Laboratories, Inc., NYC). 63¢ for 5 oz. bottle (12.6¢). Contained sodium perborate. Excessively abrasive. Slightly more alkaline than allowed by Federal Specifications.

Walgreen Magnesia (Walgreen Co., Chicago). 37¢ for 5¼ oz. container (7¢). Contained sodium perborate or similar oxygen-liberating compound.

Zincora (Park Laboratories, NYC). 69¢ for 1 lb. cardboard container with metal ends (4.3¢). Contained sodium perborate or similar oxygen-liberating compound. Contained starch. Abrasive. Slightly more alkaline than allowed by Federal Specifications.

Liquids

(In alphabetical order. Figures in parentheses represent cost per oz.)

Sears Approved (Sears, Roebuck). Cat. No.—7359. 29¢ plus postage for 5 fl. oz. (5.8¢). 30% alcohol.

Bonded (William A. Webster Co.). 29¢ for 4 fl. oz. (7.3¢). 30% alcohol.

Dr. West's Vray (Weco Products Co.). 47¢ for 6 oz. (7.8¢). Contained starch. This product is more like a liquid tooth paste than anything else despite the fact that it is labeled "Not a Liquid, Not a Paste, Not a Powder." May require considerable exertion—shaking, hitting the bottle against the heel of the hand—to start it flowing.

Macy's (R. H. Macy & Co.). 34¢ for 4 fl. oz. (8.5¢).

Meyer's (Valentine Laboratories, Inc.). 33¢ for 3 fl. oz. (11¢).

Teel (Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio). 39¢ for 3 fl. oz. (13¢).

Cue (Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co.). 23¢ for 1¼ fl. oz. (18.4¢).

CLASSICAL RECORDINGS

CU's annual review of the year's outstanding records

As CU's report on the record industry came off the press last year, the major disc manufacturers had for more than twelve months been at peace with the American Federation of Musicians, and recordings were flowing from the studios at a tremendous rate, though only a limited number had reached the stores.

Since that time releases of both popular and classical new records have swelled to something like their prewar size and fairly sizeable quantities of once hard-to-get items from the disc catalogs are beginning to find their way into the retail record shops.

However, the situation is still far from perfect. The public demand for records still exceeds the available production by a very considerable margin, and it will be at least another twelve months before supply and demand really begin to meet on anything like even terms.

Despite these production difficulties, there have been many interesting new developments in recording and reproduction technique, disc manufacture and certain aspects of merchandising. A few of the most important are here summarized.

DISC MANUFACTURE—QUANTITY AND QUALITY

There are at present more than 200 record labels available in retail stores across the country, aside from those of the "big three" companies: RCA-Victor, Columbia and Decca. Some of them, like Capitol, offer genuine competition on a large scale in the field of popular music. Others, such as Musicraft, Disc, Blue Note and Commodore, direct their efforts toward a limited public of connoisseurs. The remainder, comprising almost two-thirds of the total, are the products of small enterprises which came into their own during the wartime record shortage and the Musician's Union recording ban. It is very likely that most of them will fall by the wayside during the next year or so, when competition begins to get really tough. Nevertheless, the small independent recording firms—or the best of them, at least—will always play an important role in the record picture, both for the consumers and for the industry as a whole. It is these companies that can supply much in the way of connoisseur disc repertoire which the giant concerns cannot or will not fit into their mass production scheme.

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In general, the next year may expect to see a great increase in the production capacity of the major record companies, fewer but better independent manufacturers in the field, and the beginning of a new, large-scale, competitive trend in the industry, this last being supplied in large part by the forthcoming record enterprise of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Qualitatively the biggest single improvement in record manufacture has been the flexible *vinylite* disc, marketed by RCA-Victor and a few of the independent companies. When these are pressed from high-quality matrices, they offer practically noiseless playing surfaces with resultant improvement of reproduction. At present, though, the new discs are still high in price (\$2-\$2.50) and limited in production both as to repertoire and total quantity, and not wholly consistent in manufacture. However, it seems reasonable to suppose that such defects will be corrected in the near future, and that the solution of the mass production problem will lower the price to somewhere within the reach of the average record-buyer's purse.

It should be pointed out again that vinylite records will give good results in wear and reproduction only when played with a lightweight phonograph pick-up (1½ oz. or less).

The quality of the playing surfaces on shellac discs, particularly those manufactured by Victor and Columbia, has improved noticeably during the past year. This may be due, it is rumored, to the impregnation of the shellac compound with a certain amount of vinylite. The actual facts of the situation, though, are in the nature of closely guarded trade secrets.

The one annoying defect still apparent in many domestic discs is off-center pressing, which results in unpleasant variance in pitch upon playing, since one side of the disc passes the needle faster than the other.

THE MERCHANDISING AND PRICE SITUATION

The present emphasis by the major record companies on new recordings of both old and new repertoire has led to a difficult problem for the discriminating buyers of classical records: that of obtaining some of the truly choice older discs which have either been officially deleted from domestic catalogs during the war or which are simply not available even though listed in current catalogs.

While many of the new classical recordings represent a vast improvement in the matter of sheer reproduction of sound, the performances don't necessarily displace the memorable discs of the past, particularly in the realm of chamber music, art-song and opera. Even so, Victor and Columbia have seen fit to devote the greater part of their limited plant capacity to the manufacture of the latest products of their studios, leaving the eager connoisseur to do without or to try his luck at the high-priced "collectors' shops."

Victor has embarked on one interesting attempt at solving this problem, pending enlargement of manufacturing facilities. This amounts to controlled importation and national merchandising of records made by Victor's English affiliate, His Master's Voice. Most of the repertoire mentioned in the paragraph above was available originally on these discs. The only catch for the record buyer is that the records in question are about twice the price of the domestic product. However, it is worth noting that the manufacturing standards of English discs are extremely high.

It is said that Decca, too, is about to enter upon a national distribution scheme for classical records made by their sister company in England. The repertoire offered by the English Decca catalog is most interesting, and some of the recording is extraordinarily fine.

Recently, almost all of the large record companies announced price increases, not on their individual records (except for the popular Victor black label) but on their album sets. Obviously the manufacturers would like to take a chance and charge more than the present \$1 per 12-inch classical record, but they are afraid to take the plunge lest it mean a repetition of the dismal period between 1930-35. Hence the rather unstable compromise course they have taken.

NEW RECORDING TECHNIQUES

The most notable fact about the newest recordings issued during 1946 is their trend toward greater consistency in quality of reproduction. While there are still some recordings coming on the market from the large companies which reveal poor frequency balance and faulty acoustics, the present trend is toward ever greater clarity and a truly realistic frequency balance that reflects the actual conditions of recording

rather than the defects of the average phonograph for which it is tailored. The present frequency range employed for commercial recording is about 50 to 8500 cycles-per-second, and the chances are that it will gradually be extended to reach 10,000 or even 12,000 cycles.

Unfortunately, only very high quality phonographs can do justice to the best of these discs, and very few, if any, are available at the moment. However, it should be stressed that a limited range machine with a *properly balanced* frequency range will give excellent results on these records.

The situation at this time provides no reason to change CU's remarks of last year concerning magnetic tape and other non-disc methods of recording. There appears to be no likelihood that disc recording will become obsolete for at least another ten years, and it is very possible that improvements in present recording methods will give it an even longer lease on life. For instance, reasonably priced and well-made two-speed turntables are finding their way onto the open market, which means that one can adapt a phonograph for the use of 16-inch, 33-1/3 R.P.M. discs (such as those used in broadcasting) without resorting to a major operation. Such records are not yet available in quantity to retail buyers; but the time is very close at hand when they will be. It is quite possible that in five years one will expect as a matter of course to own records that play 15 minutes or more of music on each side, and with a quality of tone and freedom from surface noise unknown to present day owners of shellac discs.

The following notes, prepared by CU's record consultant, present an expert's opinion on the most significant of the recordings issued during the past year. They are intended primarily as a guide to those who wish to give records as gifts. When you buy records for yourself, you should supplement the expert's opinion with your own judgment of what you like.

All prices given are exclusive of taxes. Most record albums are available in sequences suitable for record changes as well as for manual machines.

Classical Records

Bach: Brandenburg Concertos, No. 3 in G and No. 4 in G. Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitsky with Richard Bur-

gin (violin), Georges Laurent and George Madsen (flutes). *Victor* DM-1050, \$4.85. The music is Bach at his most delightful. The performances, particularly of No. 4 (with the two flutes), are spirited, brilliant and clear. The recording is excellent.

Bach: Cantata No. 78 ("Jesu Der Du Meine Seele"). Sung by the Bethlehem Bach Choir and Orchestra under Ifor Jones with Lucien Metz (tenor) and Mack Harrell (bass). *Victor* M-1045, \$4.85. One of the few Bach cantatas to be recorded in its entirety. The quality of the performance fails to measure up to that of the music itself.

Bach: Concerto No. 1 in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra. Played by Eugene Istomin (piano) with the Busch Chamber Players. *Columbia* M-624, \$3.85. Perhaps the greatest of the Bach keyboard concertos, played with immense verve by the Busch Chamber Players but with rather hard tone by the pianist. We suggest a hearing of *Victor* M-250 (with Edwin Fischer) for comparison.

Bach: Goldberg Variations. Played by Wanda Landowska (harpsichord). *Victor* M-1022, \$7.25. This gigantic work ranks with Beethoven's "Diabelli Variations" as the greatest of its kind. Mme. Landowska, who, as Virgil Thomson says, "plays the harpsichord better than anyone else plays anything," is superb, as is the recording itself. One of the landmarks of the phonograph literature!

Bach: Organ Music (Passacaglia in C Minor, "Little" G Minor Fugue, "Fanfare" Fugue in C, Chorale and Chorale-Prelude "Ein Feste Burg," and "Sheep May Safely Graze" arranged by Biggs). Played by E. Power Biggs on the very fine modern organ in Harvard University's Memorial Chapel. Mr. Biggs gives an outstanding account of the mighty C Minor Passacaglia and does well with the three shorter pieces. The recording ranks with the best domestic organ work we have heard.

Bach: Violin and Clavier Sonata No. 5 in E. Played by Yehudi Menuhin and Wanda Landowska (harpsichord). *Victor* Album M-1035, \$3.85. The poignant slow movement and brilliant finale alone are worth the price of this album. Performance and recording are very fine.

Beethoven: 'Cello and Piano Sonata No. 5 in D Major Op. 102, No. 2. Played by Gregor Piatigorsky ('cello) and Ralph Berkowitz (piano). *Columbia* X-258, \$2.85. A disappointing performance and inferior recording of Beethoven's last 'cello sonata. Unfortunately there is no other version available in the domestic record catalogs.

Beethoven: Coriolan Overture, Op. 62. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-9023, \$1. The Maestro is not in

good form on this disc. Interpretation, performance and recording are all uneven in quality.

Beethoven: Fidelio ("Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?") Sung by Rose Bampton (soprano) with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-9110, \$1. Fine but not outstanding performance of Leonora's great aria from Beethoven's only opera.

Beethoven: Leonore Overture No. 3 and Prometheus Overture. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* SP-2, \$2.25. We have heard Toscanini do better with the Leonore No. 3 than this, but it is, nevertheless, a fine recorded performance. Even better, though, is the performance and recording of the less significant Prometheus Overture on side 4.

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1 in C, Op. 15. Played by Ania Dorfmann with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* M-1036, \$4.85. Delightful early Beethoven, magnificently played and recorded.

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37. Played by Artur Schnabel with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* M-1016, \$4.85. Despite the galaxy of great names and fine music represented on these discs, this album should never have been released. The recording was made from an NBC Symphony broadcast and is full of mechanical defects including "wows" and lack of adequate room resonance.

Beethoven: String Quintet in C Major Op. 29. Played by the Budapest Quartet with Milton Katims (viola). *Columbia* M-623, \$4.85. Brilliant, precise performance of enjoyable early Beethoven. Recording is good but unresonant.

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 7 in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2. Played by Isaac Stern with Alexander Zakin (piano). *Columbia* M-604, \$4.85. This, along with the "Kreutzer" and Op. 96 in G, is the best of the Beethoven violin sonatas. Stern's virile and spirited performance, backed by good piano accompaniment and good recording, make for a fine modern version of this work.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36. Played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner. *Columbia* M-597, \$4.85. Ultrabright performance and recording, but not as much to our taste as the older and less tense Beecham interpretation on *Columbia* M-302.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 in D Minor ("Choral"). Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy with Stella Roman (soprano), Enid Szantho (contralto), Frederick Jagel (tenor), Nicola Moscona (basso), and The Westminster Choir, *Columbia* M-591, \$8.85. A capable but

not very inspired performance of the last of Beethoven's "mighty nine." Our choice is still the old Weingartner-Vienna Philharmonic album, *Columbia* M-227.

Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony, Op. 14. Played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Monteux. *Victor* M-994, \$6.85. No other conductor has ever recreated the savage imagination behind this work in quite the manner that Monteux has in concert and in his previous recording, made in France, and once available as *Victor* M-111. Here at last, he repeats the miracle and has the benefit of first-rate recording technique.

Bernstein: Jeremiah Symphony. Played by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein with Nan Merriman (mezzo-soprano). *Victor* M-1026, \$3.85. America's brilliant young conductor-pianist is also a composer of very distinct musical and dramatic gifts. The final "Lamentation," as sung by Miss Merriman, is worth the price of the album.

Bizet: Carmen (excerpts). Sung by Risé Stevens (mezzo-soprano), Nadine Conner (soprano), Raoul Jobin (tenor), Robert Weede (baritone) with the Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra under George Sebastian. *Columbia* M-607, \$5.85. Highlights, including the "Habanera," "Card Song," "Seguidilla," "Toreador Song" and Final Scene, from Bizet's opera sung in spirited rather than refined or subtle fashion. The recording is fairly good.

Bizet: Symphony in C Major. Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* M-596, \$4.85. A pert and charming score written when the composer was still a student in the Paris Conservatoire. Performance is crisp and recording crystal clear.

Brahms: Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53. Sung by Marian Anderson (contralto) with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Municipal Chorus under Pierre Monteux. *Victor* SP-13, \$2.25. Miss Anderson's earlier recording of this deeply moving Brahms score (*Victor* M-555) was one of her very best. Unfortunately, since it consisted of one 12-inch and one 10-inch disc, it was ill-adapted for most automatic record changing mechanisms, hence her new version of the work. From the point of view of sheer vocalism and good balance between the male choir and the orchestra, we still prefer her earlier set with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. On the other hand, the new set, besides being playable on the average record changer, has the advantage of magnificent conducting by Pierre Monteux.

Brahms: Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major for Piano and Orchestra Op. 83.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Played by Rudolf Serkin (piano) with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. *Columbia* M-584, \$6.85. Musically, this is the most completely satisfying performance of this Concerto we have ever heard. The deeply poetic reading of Mr. Serkin and the warm, surging tone of the Philadelphia Orchestra provide a perfect combination. The recording could have been a bit brighter in tone, but is otherwise very fine.

Brahms: Liebeslieder Waltzes, Op. 52. Sung by the RCA-Victor Chorale with Pierre Luboshutz and Genia Nemenoff (duo-pianists) under Robert Shaw. *Victor* M-1076, \$3.85. Eighteen lovely waltz-songs, perfectly sung and recorded with marvelous clarity and fullness of tone.

Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68. Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* M-621, \$5.85; and by the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski. *Victor* V-4 (vinylite), \$10.85. We find the rhythmic energy of Rodzinski's interpretation preferable to the essentially lush approach cultivated by Stokowski. Both recordings are excellent.

Brahms: Concerto in D Major for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 77. Played by Joseph Szigeti (violin) with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. *Columbia* M-603, \$5.85. Despite its nearly 15-year vintage, Szigeti's early recording of the Brahms Violin Concerto for *Columbia* with Hamilton Harty and the Hallé Orchestra has long been considered one of the truly great performances of that work. With the benefit of modern recording technique, Szigeti contributes a more mature and lyric reading, but we feel he is badly matched with the Philadelphia Orchestra. It is as though we were to find a magnificent Douglas fir ensconced among the myriad and colorful tropic vegetation of an equatorial jungle.

Bruch: Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26. Played by Yehudi Menuhin with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Monteux. *Victor* M-1023, \$3.85. Bruch's lushly romantic Concerto provides a vehicle for the best playing we have heard from Menuhin in some years. The orchestral support under Monteux's baton and the recording are both superb.

Chopin: Piano Music. (Mazurka No. 19 in B Minor, Op. 30, No. 2; Mazurka No. 43 in G Minor, Op. 67, No. 2; Mazurka No. 49 in F Minor, Op. 68, No. 4; Nocturne No. 19 in E Minor, Op. 72, No. 1; Nocturne No. 20 in C-Sharp Minor, Posth.; Waltz No. 13 in D-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 3; Waltz No. 11 in G-Flat Major, Op. 70, No. 1; Polonaise No. 9 in B-Flat Major, Op. 71, No. 2.) Played by Maryla

Jonas. *Columbia* M-626, \$3.85. This piano album, comprising some of the lesser known, small Chopin pieces, is one of the most enjoyable it has been our privilege to hear. Miss Jonas, a newcomer to the American musical scene, is ultraromantic in her treatment of the music; but beautiful tonal gradations and tasteful phrasing make her interpretations palatable even for dyed-in-the-wool purists. The recording is good, but the labeling of the records on sides 1 and 5 is sadly in error, as comparison with our listing above will show.

Chopin: Piano Music. (Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante, Op. 22; Polonaise in A-Flat, Op. 53; Waltz in F, Op. 34, No. 2.) Played by Vladimir Horowitz. *Victor* M-1034, \$3.85. The cold-blooded brilliance of Horowitz's Chopin playing has little appeal for us. However, we cannot but gasp in admiration after hearing the miraculous legato achieved in the Andante Spianato of Op. 22. The recording is somewhat thin.

Copland: "Appalachian Spring" Ballet Suite. Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky. *Victor* M-1046, \$4.25. Copland's ballet for Martha Graham can be numbered among the great and permanent masterworks of American music, a wonderful blend of the true folklore spirit, sophisticated abstraction, and deeply personal poetic feeling. Performance and recording are superb.

Copland: "A Lincoln Portrait." Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski with Kenneth Spencer (narrator). *Columbia* X-266, \$2.85. A highly effective and beautifully constructed piece d'occasion, well played and superbly recorded; but Mr. Spencer is not entirely at ease with the spoken words of the Great Emancipator.

Debussy: Danses Sacrée et Profane; and **Ravel:** Introduction and Allegro. Played by Marcel Grandjany (harp) with Victor Chamber Orchestra under Sylvan Levin. *Victor* M-1021, \$3.85. Two impressionist-lyric classics of the harp repertoire, ably interpreted and well recorded.

Debussy: Preludes (Book I) and Sur le Nom de Haydn. Played by E. Robert Schmitz (piano). *Victor* M-1031, \$6. Capable pianist and conscientious musician that M. Schmitz is, he cannot hope to match the miraculous subtlety and poetic feeling of Walter Gieseking (*Columbia* M-352) in these impressionist piano gems. The recording is fair.

Dohnanyi: Suite in F-Sharp Minor, Op. 19. Played by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Los Angeles under Alfred Wallenstein. *Decca* DA-433, \$3.85. A first rate modern recording, badly needed, of a charming and youthful opus by Erno Dohnanyi, foremost of

the older generation of Hungarian composers.

Dvorak: Symphony No. 5 in E Minor ("From the New World"). Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. *Columbia* M-570, \$5.85. Fine performance and brilliant recording of Dvorak's American classic.

Falla: El Amor Brujo (excerpts). Sung by Argentinita (mezzo-soprano) with the Ballet Theatre Orchestra under Antal Dorati. *Decca* A-390, \$3.25. The greater part of the gypsy ballet by Spain's outstanding contemporary master is poorly played by the orchestra, but magnificently sung by the late Argentinita.

Franck: Symphony in D Minor. Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. *Columbia* M-608, \$5.85. Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (*Victor* M-840) have given a superb interpretation of the Franck Symphony. This latest recording under Mr. Ormandy's baton sounds coarse and bombastic by comparison.

Gomez: Il Guarany, Overture. Played by the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* 11-9112, \$1. This Verdi operatic overture by the Brazilian, Antonio Carlos Gomez, has for many years been restricted to the brass band repertoire. Played superbly on this disc in its original symphonic form, the music takes a decided new lease on life.

Grieg: Symphonic Dances, Op. 64; and **Liadov:** Baba Yaga, Op. 56. Played by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under Fabien Seivitzky. *Victor* M-1066, \$3.85. Colorful and comparatively little-known music from Scandinavia and Russia, capably but not brilliantly performed, excellently recorded.

Grofé: Grand Canyon Suite. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* M-1038, \$4.85. Ultrabright performance and brash recording of Grofé's gaudy picture-postcard score.

Handel: L'Allegro, "Let Me Wander Not Unseen"; and **Purcell:** The Indian Queen, "I Attempt from Love's Sickness to Fly." Sung by Blanche Thebom (mezzo-soprano) with Victor String Orchestra under Macklin Marrow. *Victor* 10-1178, 75¢. Two exquisite gems of the classic vocal repertoire, superbly sung and recorded.

Harris: Soliloquy and Dance; and **Benjamin:** Elegy, Waltz and Toccata. Played by William Primrose (viola) with Johana Harris (piano) and Vladimir Sokoloff (piano). *Victor* M-1061, \$4.85. The Soliloquy and Dance by Roy Harris is one of his best and most characteristic works, and in this recording forms a notable addition to the slim phonographic representation of American chamber music. The Elegy, Waltz, and Toccata

- by Australian-born Arthur Benjamin is turbulent and romantic in its expression. Both performances are magnificent; the recording fairly good in the Benjamin, superb in the Harris.
- Haydn:** Symphony No. 97 in C. Played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Victor* DM-1059, \$3.85. Beecham adopts a basically lyric approach to this very great and brilliant Haydn Symphony, which in its own fashion is highly effective. Recording and playing are superb.
- Haydn:** Symphony No. 98 in B Flat; and **Mendelssohn:** Scherzo from String Octet. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* M-1025, \$4.85. Another great Haydn symphony, magnificently performed and well recorded.
- Hindemith:** Six Chansons to Verses of Rainer Maria Rilke ("The Roe," "A Swan," "Since All Is Passing," "Springtime," "In Winter," "The Orchard"). Sung by the RCA Victor Chorale under Robert Shaw. *Victor* 11-8868, \$1. Exquisite jewel-like settings by a great living German composer of words by a late, great German poet. Singing and recording, good.
- Ibert:** Escales (Ports of Call). Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* X-263, \$2.85. Brilliant but not subtle performance and highly effective recording of Mediterranean vignettes by a modern Frenchman.
- d'Indy:** Istar Variations and Fervaa—Prelude. Played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Monteux. *Victor* SP-16, \$2.25. The colorful and complex Istar Variations by Franck's illustrious pupil, d'Indy, receive a magnificent performance, a fairly good recording.
- Liszt:** Mefisto Waltz and **Albeniz:** Evocacion. William Kapell (piano). *Victor* SP-11, \$2.25. Often performed as an orchestral work, Liszt's Mefisto Waltz is even more effective as a piano piece. Young William Kapell plays brilliantly and is well recorded in the bargain.
- Liszt:** Piano Music (Dante Sonata, Concert Etude No. 2 in F Minor, Funerailles, Liebestraum No. 3 in A-Flat Major, Hungarian Rhapsody No. 15). Played by Gyorgy Sandor. *Columbia* M-602, \$4.85. The Dante Sonata, one of the really great piano works of Liszt, plus a number of shorter pieces are given dynamic and highly intelligent readings here. The recording, however, lacks tonal richness and proper room resonance.
- Mahler:** Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen. Sung by Carol Brice (contralto) with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner. *Columbia* X-267, \$2.85. This beautiful cycle of early songs by Mahler brings to records an extraordinarily gifted young Negro contralto, whose voice is comparable to Anderson's and who, in many respects, is an even finer musician. Here is one album to be heard and treasured.
- Mahler:** Symphony No. 4 in G Major. Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Bruno Walter with Desi Halban (soprano). *Columbia* M-589, \$6.85. Mahler's disciple and friend, Bruno Walter, delivers an affecting reading of a leisurely and altogether ingratiating pastoral piece. Recording good.
- Mascagni:** Cavalleria Rusticana, "Voi lo sapete"; and **Verdi:** La Forza del Destino, "Pace, pace, mio Dio." Sung by Zinka Milanov (soprano) with orchestra under Frieder Weissmann. *Victor* 11-8927, \$1. Mme. Milanov's rich vocalism is heard to good advantage in these two favorite Italian opera arias. The "Voi lo sapete" has been particularly in need of a good modern recording, and we certainly have it here.
- Milhaud:** Protée (Symphonic Suite No. 2). Played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Monteux. *Victor* M-1027, \$3.85. South American dance rhythms and polytonal modernism are found cheek by jowl in this youthful and enormously vital suite which Milhaud wrote for 20th century setting of a Greek legend. Performance superb. Recording good.
- Mozart:** Seraglio Overture. Played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Victor* 11-9191, \$1. The combination of Beecham and Mozart can always be counted on as sure-fire. This much-needed new recording of the Seraglio Overture is no exception.
- Mozart:** String Quintet No. 2 in C-Major (K. 515). Played by the Budapest Quartet with Milton Katims (viola). *Columbia* M-586, \$4.85. A fine performance of one of Mozart's last great chamber music masterworks is marred by unresonant recording.
- Mozart:** Serenade No. 6 in D (K. 239) and Serenade No. 9 in D, Concertante. Played by the Vox Chamber Orchestra under Edward Fendler. *Vox* set 161, \$5. Minor but wholly delightful Mozart, capably played, fairly well recorded.
- Mozart:** Organ Sonatas (No. 4 in D, K. 144; No. 10 in F, K. 244; No. 11 in D, K. 245; No. 14 in C, K. 278; No. 16 in C, K. 328; No. 17 in C, K. 336). Played by E. Power Biggs with the Fiedler Sinfonietta. *Victor* M-1019, \$3.85. More minor Mozart, all of it charming and vivacious, excellently played and recorded.
- Mozart:** Violin Concerto No. 5 in A-Major (K. 219). Played by Adolf Busch and the Busch Chamber Players. *Columbia* M-609, \$4.85. Mozart's so-called Turkish Concerto is performed with enormous verve and fine style, but the soloist's tone is far from pleasant and his technique far from flawless.
- Offenbach:** La belle Helene, Overture. Played by the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* 11-9026, \$1. Sparkling curtain-raiser for one of Offenbach's French comic-operas, brilliantly played and recorded.
- Prokofieff:** Alexander Nevsky Cantata, Op. 78. Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy with the Westminster Choir and Jennie Tourel (mezzo-soprano). *Columbia* M-580, \$5.85. Magnificent recorded version of Prokofieff's memorable score for Eisenstein's film of medieval Russia and the Teutonic knights.
- Prokofieff:** Overture on Hebrew Themes Op. 34. Played by Vivian Rivkin (piano) and David Weber (clarinet) with string quartet. *Disc* 4020, \$2.25. Written in this country in 1919, the Overture of Hebrew Themes is a singularly evocative little tone picture of the once flourishing Jewish culture of Eastern Europe. Performance and recording excellent.
- Prokofieff:** Piano Sonata No. 7, Op. 83. Played by Vladimir Horowitz. *Victor* M-1042, \$2.85. Ruthless pounding rhythms born of Russia, and War, and Schumannesque romanticism are among the more striking elements in this 7th Piano Sonata of Prokofieff. As might be expected, it is ideal for the steely pianism of Horowitz, but not so ideal for recording engineers.
- Prokofieff:** Romeo and Juliet, Suite No. 2, Op. 64. Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra under Serge Prokofieff. *Disc* 754, \$15. Music from Prokofieff's large-scale ballet on the Romeo and Juliet story gets a fairly good performance, but rather poor recording. The score itself ranges from highly effective moments to others decidedly dull.
- Prokofieff:** Scythian Suite, Op. 20. Played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Desire Defauw. *Victor* M-1040, \$3.85. Savagely barbaric and brilliant music from the composer's youth, evocative of the primeval inhabitants of southern Russia. Performance is superb, the recording brilliant but over-resonant.
- Prokofieff:** Violin Sonata in D-Major, Op. 94. Played by Joseph Szigeti with Leonid Hambro (piano). *Columbia* M-620, \$3.85. An outstanding example of Prokofieff's capacity for lyric expression. The recording favors the violin at the expense of the important piano part, but this cannot spoil our enjoyment of the music's essential beauty or of Szigeti's fine playing.
- Puccini:** Tosca, "Vissi d'arte" and Gianni Schicci, "O mio Babbino caro." Sung by Licia Albanese (soprano) with Victor Orchestra under Frieder Weissmann. *Victor* 11-9115, \$1. A good modern recording of "Vissi d'arte" has long been needed, while the melodious Gianni Schicci excerpt has never before appeared in the domestic

record catalogs. Mme. Albanese is in fine voice and is abetted by clear, full-bodied recording.

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18. Played by Artur Rubinstein with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Golschmann, *Victor* M-1075, \$5.85. Played by Eugene List with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Los Angeles under Alfred Wallenstein, *Decca* DA-465, \$5.85. Played by Gyorgy Sandor with the N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski, *Columbia* M-MM-605, \$4.85. Only Artur Rubinstein's pianism recaptures the spirit and excitement found in Rachmaninoff's own early recording of this immensely popular work (*Victor* M-58). Rubinstein also has the benefit of the best recording and the most competent orchestral support.

Rachmaninoff: The Isle of the Dead, Op. 29. Played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos, *Columbia* M-599, \$3.85. Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky, *Victor* M-1024, \$3.85. Neither of these performances matches the old one conducted by the composer himself on *Victor* M-75; but Mitropoulos is far closer to the mark than Koussevitzky. As for recording, the latter is too resonant, the former not resonant enough.

Respighi: The Birds. Played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Desire Defauw. *Victor* SP-14, \$2.25. The late Italian master, Respighi, arranged a series of 17th and 18th century harpsichord pieces about various birds into a most delightful orchestral work. Performance here is fine. The recording brilliant but over-resonant.

Rossini: Overtures: La Gazza Ladra, Il Signor Bruschino, The Barber of Seville, La Cenerentola and William Tell; Ballet Music. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* V-2 (vinylite), \$8.85 and *Victor* M-1037, \$4.85. Peppery performance by Toscanini of some of his favorites, with recording to match.

Schubert: Die Schöne Müllerin, Op. 25 (complete song-cycle with "Unge-duld" omitted). Sung by Lotte Lehmann (soprano) with Paul Ulanowsky (piano). *Columbia* M-615, \$7.85. Having recorded "Unge-duld" previously for *Victor*, Mme. Lehmann has seen fit to omit it from her otherwise complete recording of Schubert's great "Schöne Müllerin" cycle. Her singing of Schubert's song-narrative of the young miller and his hapless love is uneven at times, particularly as regards phrasing and breath control; but at other times, Mme. Lehmann reveals the art of Lieder singing at its very finest. The recording, unfortunately, is not well balanced, the piano being much too far in the background and the voice too close to the microphone.

Schubert: Symphony No. 6 in C. Played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Victor* M-1014, \$4.85. Discursive and rambling symphonic Schubert of youthful vintage, but delightful listening for all that. Performance and recording are superb.

Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B Minor ("Unfinished"). Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky. *Victor* M-1039, \$3.85. Replacing an earlier recording under his baton, Dr. Koussevitzky adopts a far more lyric treatment of Schubert's famed "Unfinished" than previously. The recording is somewhat over-resonant but not unbearably so.

Schubert: Die Winterreise (excerpts), Vol. 11, Op. 89. Sung by Lottie Lehmann (soprano) with Paul Ulanowsky (piano). *Columbia* M-587, \$3. Together with *Victor* M-692 and *Columbia* M-466, this album completes Mme. Lehmann's interpretation of Schubert's somberly beautiful song-cycle written the year before his early death. There is a certain amount of uneven quality in singing and recording on these records, but in general the results are more consistent and meritorious than in the "Schöne Müllerin" album noted above.

Schumann: Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54. Played by Claudio Arrau with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Karl Krueger. *Victor* M-1009, \$4.85. A brilliant performance from the technical standpoint but singularly unpoetic treatment of the most romantic of all piano concertos. The recording is reasonably good.

Schumann: Symphony No. 1 in B-Flat Major. Played by the Cleveland Orchestra under Erich Leinsdorf. *Columbia* M-617, \$4.85. Schumann's Spring Symphony suffered from a very fussy reading at Koussevitzky's hands some years ago. Now we have an interpretation that is decidedly too matter-of-fact, at least in the opening measures. In many other respects, though, it is excellent, particularly in the slow movement. The recording, while rather unresonant, is good.

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6; and **Kabalevsky:** Colas Breugnon, Overture. Played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner. *Columbia* M-585, \$5.85. Only in the first movement, with its extended woodwind solos and long cantabile passages for strings, does this performance of Reiner's suffer by comparison with that of Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra for *Victor*. In most other ways it is superior, especially in the finale. The recording is very fine indeed.

Strauss: Roses from the South, Waltz. Played by the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* 11-8986, \$1. A most welcome up-to-date recording of one of the best Strauss waltzes.

Performance excellent.

Strauss: Tritsch-Tratsch Polka; and **Sousa:** Stars and Stripes Forever. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-9188, \$1. Sousa as he should be played but more often is not, coupled with a supremely vivacious treatment of a Strauss tidbit.

Strauss, Josef: Village Swallows, Waltz. Played by the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* 11-9189, \$1. See our remarks under Johann Strauss' "Roses from the South."

Stravinsky: Song of the Nightingale. Played by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Eugene Goossens. *Victor* M-1041, \$3.85. Stravinsky's tone poem inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's story of the Chinese Nightingale has never before been recorded in its entirety. While not one of Stravinsky's supremely great scores, it is one of his more enjoyable and vividly orchestrated. Recording and performance are tops.

Szymanowski: Four Mazurkas, Op. 50. Played by Artur Rubinstein (piano). *Victor* 11-9219, \$1. These short pieces by Poland's late, great contemporary composer reveal an artful blend of Chopin, impressionism and pure folksong. Playing and recording are superb.

Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker Suite. Played by the N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski, *Columbia* M-627, \$3.85. Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, *Victor* M-1020, \$3.85. Both of these new recordings of Tchaikovsky's popular ballet suite supersede earlier disc versions. We think Rodzinski has the lighter touch of the two conductors, though his woodwind players are not in a class with their colleagues from Philadelphia.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5, in E Minor, Op. 64. Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky. *Victor* M-1057, \$6.85. Erratic, fussy and rabble-raising reading of music that profits more from straightforward, virile treatment. The recording, too, is far from pleasant to the ear.

Thomson: Five Portraits. Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Virgil Thomson. *Columbia* X-255, \$2.85. Picasso, Alexander Smallens, a Russian painter and others figure in this miniature rogue's gallery concocted by New York's famed composer-critic. The result is four sides of most enjoyable listening, aided by some of the finest American orchestral recording we have ever heard.

Verdi: La Forza del Destino, Overture. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-9010, \$1. Blood-and-thunder Verdi played by a master of that tradition. Recording fair.

Wagner: Lohengrin ("Elsas Traum").

Sung by Helen Traubel (soprano) with the N. Y. Philharmonic Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* 12321-D, \$1. Miss Traubel's monumental voice is not ideal for the role of Elsa, but in spite of everything she has given us here by far the best domestic recording of this high spot from Wagner's *Lohengrin*.

Wagner: *Lohengrin* ("Bridal Chamber Scene"). Sung by Helen Traubel (soprano) and Kurt Baum (tenor) with the N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* X-261, \$2.85. Kirsten Flagstad and Lauritz Melchior recorded this scene some years ago for *Victor*, and their voices were not ideal for the roles. Neither, for that matter is Traubel's, in this instance. However, both sets are worth hearing, and a preference for one or the other is largely a matter of personal taste. The recording of the new album is good.

Wagner: *Die Walküre*, Duet from Act One, Scene Three. Helen Traubel (soprano) and Emery Darcy (tenor) with the N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* M-618, \$3.85. Mr. Darcy is revealed in this album as a very possible successor to Lauritz Melchior, and this is actually the main interest afforded by these records. For the rest, he and Miss Traubel have the redoubtable competition of Lehmann and Melchior in the complete *Walküre* Act One album recorded for *Victor* (M-298), and there can be no question as to which pair has the edge. The recording is generally good.

Wagner: *Die Walküre*—Act Three (complete). Sung by Helen Traubel (soprano), Herbert Janssen (baritone) with Metropolitan Opera Ensemble and N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski. *Columbia* M-581, \$8.85. Together with *Victor* M-298 and *Victor* M-582, this *Columbia* album makes available to record buyers a complete recording of Wagner's second opera of *The Ring* cycle, except for a few cuts in the Second Scene of Act Two. Janssen is not the most authoritative Wotan we have ever heard, but he goes about his role conscientiously. Outstanding is Rodzinski's fine pacing of the Act Three performance as a whole. The recording is very fine.

Waldteufel: *The Skaters, Waltz*. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-8949, \$1. Toscanini's performance of this old favorite is superb beyond description. The recording too is tops.

Weber: *Der Freischütz, Overture*. Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor* 11-9172, \$1. Marvelous performance, particularly of the opening part song for horns. Recording fairly good.

Celebrated Operatic Arias (Mozart: *The Marriage of Figaro*, "Non so piu

cesa sen" and "Voi che sapete"; Bellini: *La Sonnambula*, "Ah! non credea mirarti"; Puccini: *La Bohème*, "Addio di Mimi"; Gounod: *Faust*, "Le Roi de Thule" and Jewel Song; Massenet: *Manon*, "Manon's Entrance" and "Adieu, notre petit table"). Sung by

Bidu Sayao (soprano) with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra under Fausto Cleva. *Columbia* M-612, \$4.85. One of the Met's finest artists is heard at her very best in these familiar opera arias. An ideal start for any collection of operatic discs.

RECORDED JAZZ

The year's outstanding jazz recordings

In quantity of recordings made, 1946 has been the biggest year in jazz history. Countless new labels have appeared on the market, and the jazz student is faced by a really serious problem in merely listening to all of them, to say nothing of buying the ones he likes. To avoid entanglement in the raging controversy between the "modernists" and the "purists" of jazz, this report is confined to the field of traditional, generally small-band music, with emphasis on individual improvisation and good ensemble playing.

In this field, leadership still rests with *Commodore* and *Blue Note*—pioneers in the field. The big companies—*Victor* and *Columbia*—have contributed a few reissues from their files. Many of the new smaller companies have issued only a few records. For the most part, their editions are limited and their distribution inadequate. In the debatable middle-ground, between big-band commercial dance music and the much-publicized barefoot bashes of a Condon mob, there are numerous new labels including *Apollo*, *ARA*, *De Luxe*, *Jump*, *Signature*, *Queen*, etc. Most of their recordings are in the "jump" or "re-bop" field. A large part of this production has little or no musical value, but some of it is good listening and good clean fun. An occasional item of real merit is sometimes included.

Quality of records, both in the recording and the shellac, has improved over even last year's good standards. Nothing of importance has developed in the search for a satisfactory plastic record. Vinylite is still very expensive and not entirely satisfactory.

Prices remain standardized at \$1 for 10-inch records, and \$1.50 for 12-inch, with the trend toward 10-inches. The 35¢ record is a thing of the past, except for a fugitive *Bluebird* now and then, issued in tiny editions to keep the franchise. *Decca*

has a "Personality" series at 75¢ and *Victor* uses a green label which sells for \$1. Only the big-selling popular records remain at 50¢.

Buying real jazz records remains a problem, as many stores do not stock them. The following retail outlets, most of which will accept mail orders, are recommended:

Commodore Music Shop, Inc., 136 E. 42nd St., NYC.

Jazz Man Record Shop, 6420 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood 38, Cal.

Tempo Music Shop, 5945 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28, Cal.

Promenade Music Centre, 83 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Canada
Session Record Shop, 125 N. Wells St., Chicago

Columbia Music Store, 53 Clinton Ave. S., Rochester 4, N. Y.
Record Rendezvous, 214 Prospect Ave., Cleveland 15, Ohio

The following list covers only the larger and more solidly established producers of jazz recordings. Where addresses are given it may be advisable to order direct by mail.

A. M. Records (647 Means Ave., Pittsburgh 2, Penna.). One of the pioneers in the Bunk Johnson crusade, released a few more of the numbers recorded last year, including an album of three plastic 10-inch records by Bunk's Brass Band, featuring George Lewis and Jim Robinson, which sells for \$4 postpaid. Also recommended: "So Different Blues," by Dink's Good Time Music, an amazing barrelhouse piano with rhythm background.

Blue Note Records (767 Lexington Ave., NYC 21). This producer continues to ring the bell with the best in strictly purist jazz, though its output has been reduced somewhat by shellac shortages. Recommended: "Winin' Boy Blues," by Baby Dodds Jazz Four; "How Long, How Long Blues," by Pigmeat Markham; "Apex Blues" by Art Hodes Blue Five; "It's Been So Long," by Edmond Hall's Swingtet.

Blue Note attempts to keep its entire list, comprising an excellent collection of records, in stock. A Blue Note catalog is worth writing for.

Brunswick: Album of Johnny Dodds and King Oliver reissues keep up the Brunswick tradition of reviving the best in jazz and making it available to modern listeners. Tone quality, recording, and listening pleasure are remarkable for these records originally made in 1925 to 1928. Both albums are recommended.

Capitol: Continues its series of "History of Jazz" with the complete four-volume set. In quality, the records range from fair to excellent. The company also puts out records by Benny Carter, Billy Butterfield, King Cole and Cootie Williams—good jazz men all—although their Capitol product is slanted more toward the popular market. Recommended: "House of Joy," Cootie Williams, Capitol 215.

Century Record Co. (737 Fox St., New York 55). This newcomer in the field of reissues, has some good numbers, including "Weary Way Blues" by Johnny Dodds' Dixieland Thumpers (this seems to be a Dodds' year, with reissues of the late great Johnny's clarinet, and brother Baby drumming all over contemporary issues from Bunk Johnson on down the list).

Circle Sound, Inc. (38 E. 4th St., NYC 3). Modern recordings of quality and taste. Recommended: Album S-2 boogie piano solos by Montana Taylor; "Charleston Blues" by Chippie Hill; "Albert's Blues" by Baby Dodds, featuring clarinetist Albert Nicholas.

Columbia: Failed to continue their fine

line of classic reissues. Jazz lovers would like to see all of them put on the market again.

Commodore (136 E. 42 St., NYC). Dixieland capitol of the nation. Some of their 1946 releases to be especially recommended are: "Baby Won't You Please Come Home," by Wild Bill Davison, featuring Edmond Hall; "The Lady's in Love with You," by Muggsy Spanier; "Blue Lou" by Eddie Heywood, with Vic Dickenson on trombone; "Snowball," a piano solo by George Zack; "Pray for the Lights to Go Out," by Eddie Condon.

Crescent (Jazz Man Record Shop, 6420 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood 38). Outstanding are two new releases of Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band numbers, "Careless Love" and "Ory's Creole Trombone." Ory did for the West Coast what Bunk Johnson did for New York in reviving traditional and unspoiled New Orleans jazz, and these numbers are splendidly recorded.

Decca: The general level of their popular records remain good, and in addition they produce some jazz numbers. Recommended: Several Bing Crosby records with good small-band accompaniment; also "She's Funny That Way," by Eddie Condon, featuring Joe Bushkin and Billy Butterfield; "Lover Man" by Eddie Heywood.

Disc (117 W. 46th St., NYC 19). A new label put out by Asch. Included in a fine selection of folk-song, calypso and "documentary" records are a few outstanding jazz jobs. Recommended: Mary Lou Williams' album of piano solos, Disc Album 502; Pee Wee Russell's Jazz Ensemble, Album 632; Stella Brooks' unusual album of blues songs, with some fine Joe Sullivan piano and Frankie Newton trumpet, Album 620.

H.R.S. (303 Fifth Ave., NYC). Some reissues from the Hot Record Society archives and modern recordings by Sandy Williams, James P. Johnson, Dickie Wells and others are featured.

Jazz Man (6420 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood 38). This label has added three new issues by Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, modern recordings on the King Oliver pattern, and very successful ones, too. Recommended: "Milenberg Joys," "Sunset Cafe."

Jazz Record (236 W. 10th St., NYC 14). A series of four records by Art Hodes and his Jazz Record Six has been issued. Recommended: "Someday Sweetheart," "Chimes Blues."

Jubilee (Quality Records, 1832 7th St., N.W., Washington, D. C.). Featured are spirituals by Sister Ernestine Washington, accompanied by Bunk Johnson and his New Orleans Band. Recommended: "Where Could I Go?"

Keynote (522 Fifth Ave., NYC). Records by Teddy Wilson, Coleman Hawkins, Earl Hines, Cozy Cole, Sidney Bechet, Muggsy Spanier, Lester Young, George Hartman and others

are included. Recommended: "Blue Moon" by Cozy Cole's All Stars; Hartman's Dixieland Album, K115.

King Jazz (140 W. 42nd St., NYC 18). Mezz Mezzrow, jazz pioneer and a feature on many an old collectors' item, now heads a recording company of his own (he has also written a book on his life and jazz, in the order named). The KJ label features, of course, the Mezz clarinet, and also fine musicians like Sidney Bechet. Pops Foster and Kaiser Marshall. Recommended: "Out of the Gallion," "Blood on the Moon."

Musicraft: Another record company in the popular field tips its hat to jazz by including such musicians as Teddy Wilson, Lead Belly, Joe Marsala and Herman Chittison in their list. Recommended: "Southern Comfort," by Marsala.

Paramount (505 Fifth Ave., NYC 17). Reissues of blues classics are featured. There is some fine music on these, but as they are dubbings of old acoustical recordings, listening enjoyment is scant for any but the most ardent jazz student. Recommended: "Slow Driving Moan," by Ma Rainey; "Black and Evil Blues," by Alice Moore.

Rabson (111 W. 52 St., NYC). Mildred Bailey, accompanied by Red Norvo's small band, and John Kirby are included in the limited Rabson list this year. Recommended: Mildred Bailey's album, CR-2.

Session (125 N. Wells St., Chicago). A couple of fine piano solos by Cripple Clarence Lofton have been issued. Recommended: "The Fives."

Swan (1600 Broadway, NYC 19). This company has issued some good Dixieland recordings, including a re-creation of the old Original Memphis Five with Phil Napoleon, Signorelli, Spargo and McGarity. Recommended: "At the Jazz Band Ball."

Victor: If for nothing else, Victor rates an "E" for the Bunk Johnson album. Perfectly recorded at last, the George Lewis clarinet, the Jim Robinson trombone, and the driving trumpet of the grand old man from New Orleans can now be heard as they really sounded. The Victor popular list is unimpressive, although it includes the return to wax of Louis Armstrong after a long silence. An occasional good item can be found on the Bluebird label, last surviving 35¢ record. Recommended: the Bunk Johnson album, HJ-7; "Winter Time Blues," by Big Maceo; "Back of Town Blues," Louis Armstrong.

West Coast (20 Annie St., San Francisco). Lu Watters and his Yerba Buena Jazz Band are recorded, thus re-creating the ragtime age in 1946. Recommended: "Creole Belles."

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